Risey, there are worst things than getting a year older :P HAPPY BIRTHDAY and be sure to have a good one :)
Kokoro-chin

In a world of give and take, I hope that you get at least as much as you give. Best wishes for a fulfilling and fulfilled year. -Van

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE BOSS! :D CHIHO'S VERY NICE WITH LAZY ME. EHEHE) -INK

Happy birthday, risey!! Galad I can work with you! You're one of the greatest persons I've met ^^
-Icecrypt

to my wonderful risey!!!

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 1 - Blood

Scanned by Totochan

Translated by Skyami0830

Proofread by Sophendo|bot

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PARK HEE JUNG'S
COLLECTION OF
SHORT STORIES
It's been too long...

PARK HEE JUNG'S
COLLECTION OF
SHORT STORIES
It's been too long...

I probably got into this habit right after I met him, this habit of gazing for hours on end, at how objects outside my window would reflect the sunlight on them...

It wasn't really a meaningless habit. Instead of blankly staring at them, I was engraving every little detail of the things I was staring at with my eyes.

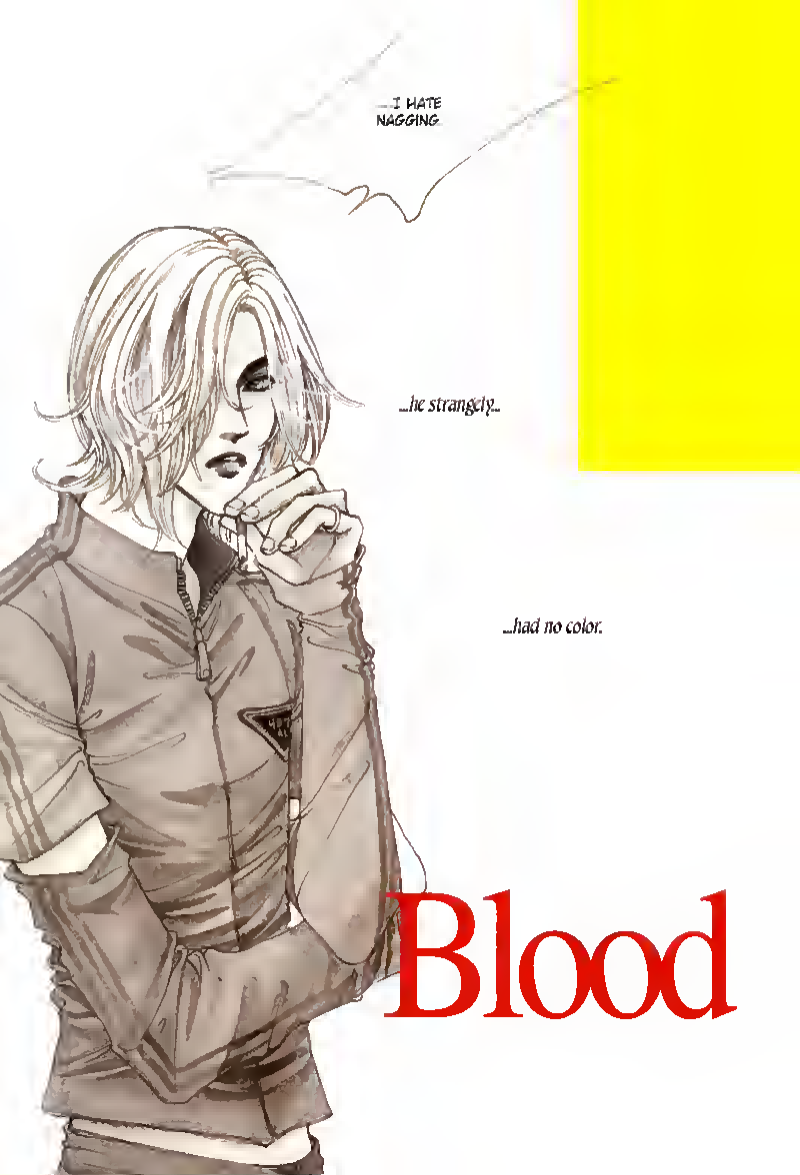
And this may already be apparent, but the sky was always blue and the trees were always a pretty hue of green that painfully chilled my eyes.

CAN'T YOU STAY A LITTLE LONGER?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO START NAGGING ME, THEN DON'T. I HAVE A LIFE OF MY OWN, YOU KNOW AND ON TOP OF THAT...

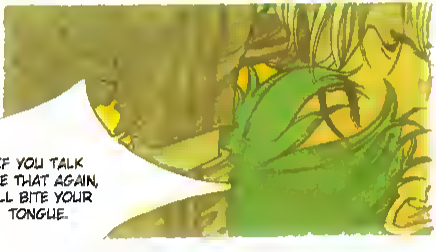
ZIP

However...


...I HATE NAGGING.
...he strangely...
...had no color.
Blood

DO YOU HAVE COLOR, TOO?
I was curious...
I was so curious from the beginning.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU KNOW... THOSE THINGS. YOUR CLOTHES, YOUR SKIN, YOUR EYES, YOUR HAIR COLOR... ALL THE THINGS THAT YOU MUST HAVE IF YOU'RE HUMAN...

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW CUTE YOU LOOK WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT. BUT, DON'T TALK TO ME AS IF I'M NOT HUMAN. I HAVE COLOR, TOO, EVEN IF IT'S NOT AS BRILLIANT AS YOURS. MY EYES ARE DISGUSTINGLY BLUE



IF YOU TALK LIKE THAT AGAIN, I'LL BITE YOUR TONGUE.

Blue...?

Liar. Your eyes are just a hazy gray one that's muddy and has lost most of its light.

But...

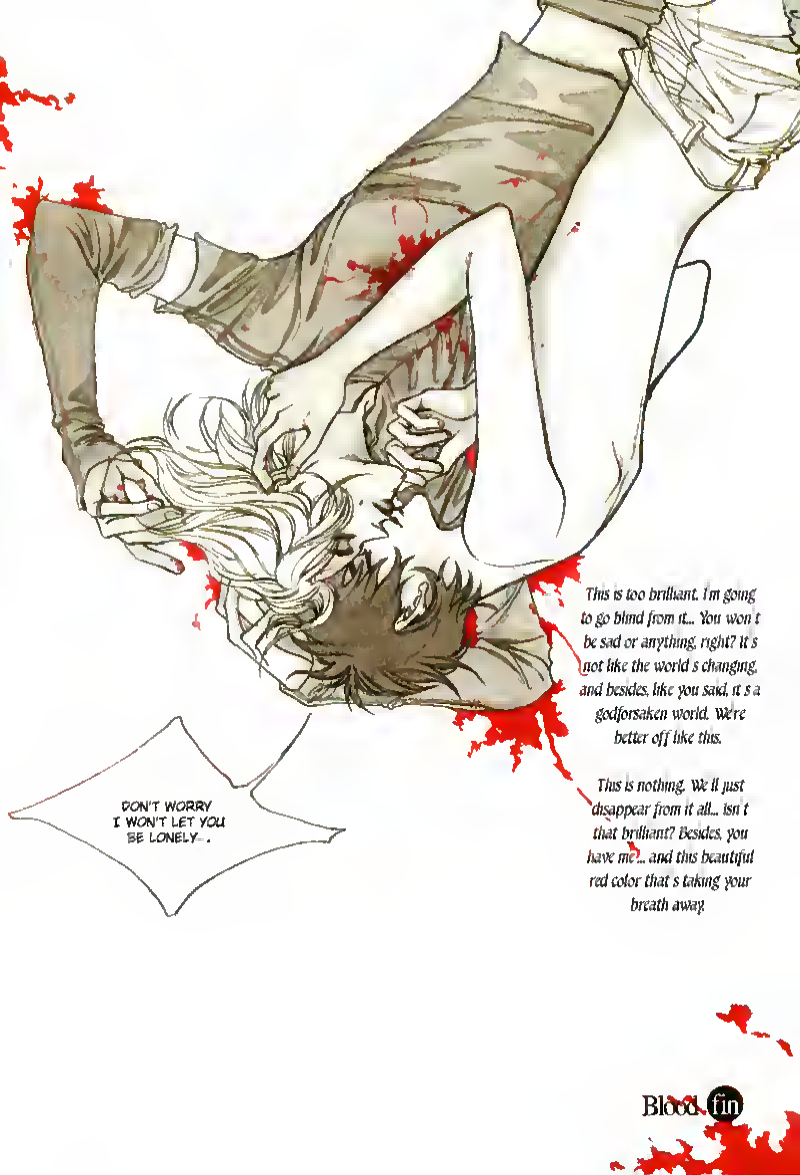
DO YOU LOVE ME...?

Strangely,
I still love you...
But can you
honestly even feel love
if you're that cold...
I JUST ASKED IF YOU LOVE ME...
WHAT? DO YOU SUDDENLY WANT TO BE JULIET OR SOMETHING?
Because you're too cold, I thought that maybe that coldness snatched away your color.
LOVE? YOU'RE CRAZY. HOW DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING LIKE THAT EXISTS IN THIS GODFORSAKEN WORLD? TELL THE DOGS TO EAT THAT SHIT...
YOU'RE ... SO SCORNFUL...
I thought you were colorless...
because of your cold nature.
Every time you spit out these kind of words, my heart feels as though it's about to freeze from these cold words.
YOU'RE TOO EMOTIONAL. JUST LIVE LIKE IT IS. WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY, EAT. WHEN YOU'RE PISSED, DRINK BEER. AND WHEN YOU'RE LONELY, HAVE SEX. IT'S THAT SIMPLE

Maybe that's why..
AARON...
...I want to kill you sometimes—so much that I go crazy from it.
I want to kill you so b-dly...
BANG

H-HEY...
WHY DID YOU...
This ...
is different somehow.
AARON, LOOK AT YOU. YOU HAVE COLOR, TOO.
HEY, I STILL THINK YOU'RE CUTE, BUT...
I DON'T THINK I CAN EMBRACE YOU NOW...

YOU HAVE COLOR, TOO. RIGHT, AARON...?
I didn't know this would happen. This is...
so brilliant...
AARON, ARE YOU GOING TO DIE...?
SHIT. DON'T MAKE A FUSS ABOUT IT. I'M NOT DEAD YET. ANYWAY, THIS IS A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME...
I LIKE YOUR COLOR.
STOP TALKING SHIT. IF I HAD ANY STRENGTH IN ME, I WOULD HAVE GOT UP AND HIT YOU BY NOW, BUT I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD. I THINK I'M A LITTLE SCARED, TOO.


DON'T WORRY I WON'T LET YOU BE LONELY...
This is too brilliant. I'm going to go blind from it... You won't be sad or anything, right? It's not like the world's changing, and besides, like you said, it's a godforsaken world. We're better off like this.
This is nothing. We'll just disappear from it all... isn't that brilliant? Besides, you have me!.. and this beautiful red color that's taking your breath away.

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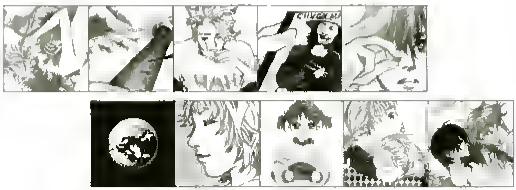

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 2 - So Long

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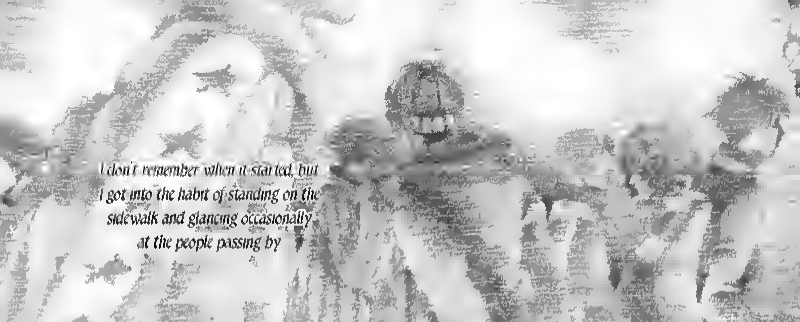
02 So Long...



I don't remember when it started, but I got into the habit of standing on the sidewalk and glancing occasionally at the people passing by.

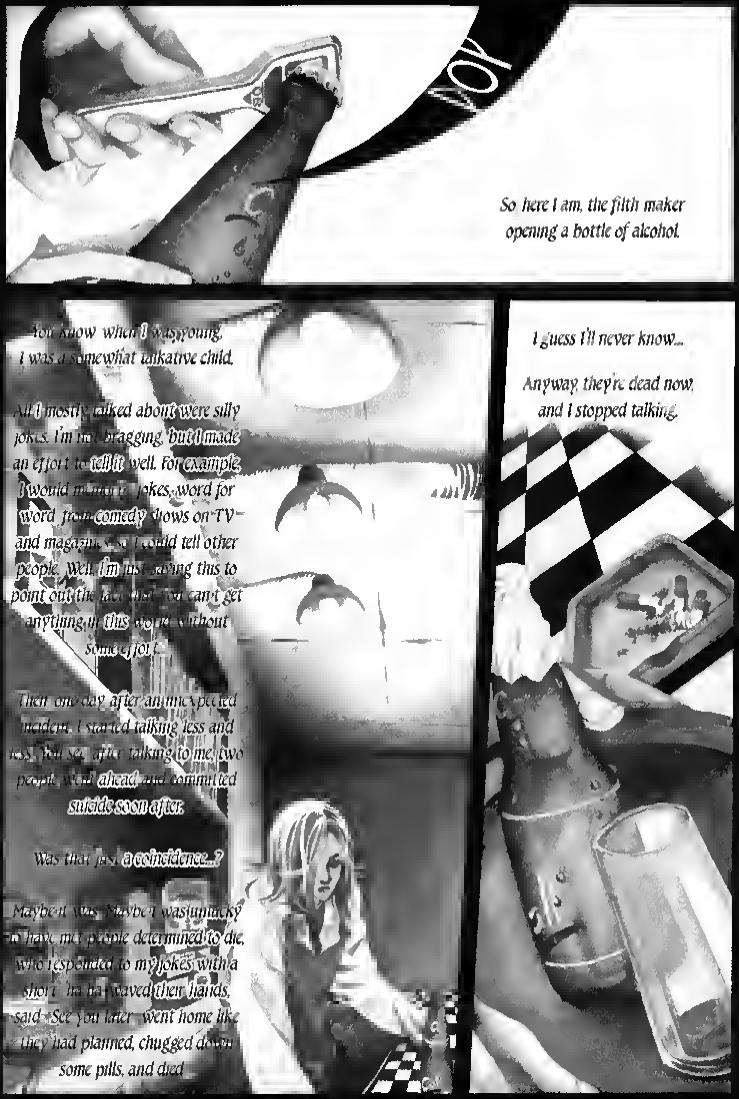
Even after resting all winter long, I started feeling that the world, which was far into the night like a newly opened theme park, seemed dizzy...

And among the people that exist in that inconsistent habit, Estraven and I, tinged with the same color, spew out filth every day.*

Here in the city the people recklessly eat each other perhaps because they feel an emptiness that never seems like it could be filled.

In reality no one really needs each other. We nauseate each other ... as if it was some habit of ours.

*In The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin, Ai and Estraven could with their minds pass off as a female, indeed with no distinguishing mark, and look alike enough to each other.


So here I am, the filth maker opening a bottle of alcohol.
You know when I was young, I was a somewhat talkative child.
All I mostly talked about were silly jokes. I'm not bragging, but I made an effort to tell it well. For example, I would memorize jokes word for word from comedy shows on TV and magazines so I could tell other people. Well, I'm just saying this to point out the fact that we can't get anything in this world without some effort.
Then one day after an unexpected incident, I started talking less and less. You see, after talking to me, two people would ahead and committed suicide soon after.
Was that just a coincidence...?
Maybe it was. Maybe I was unlucky to have met people determined to die, who responded to my jokes with a short "ha ha" waved their hands, said "See you later" went home like they had planned, chugged down some pills, and died.
I guess I'll never know...
Anyway, they're dead now, and I stopped talking.

*88 is the name of the brand.

...might die
soon.

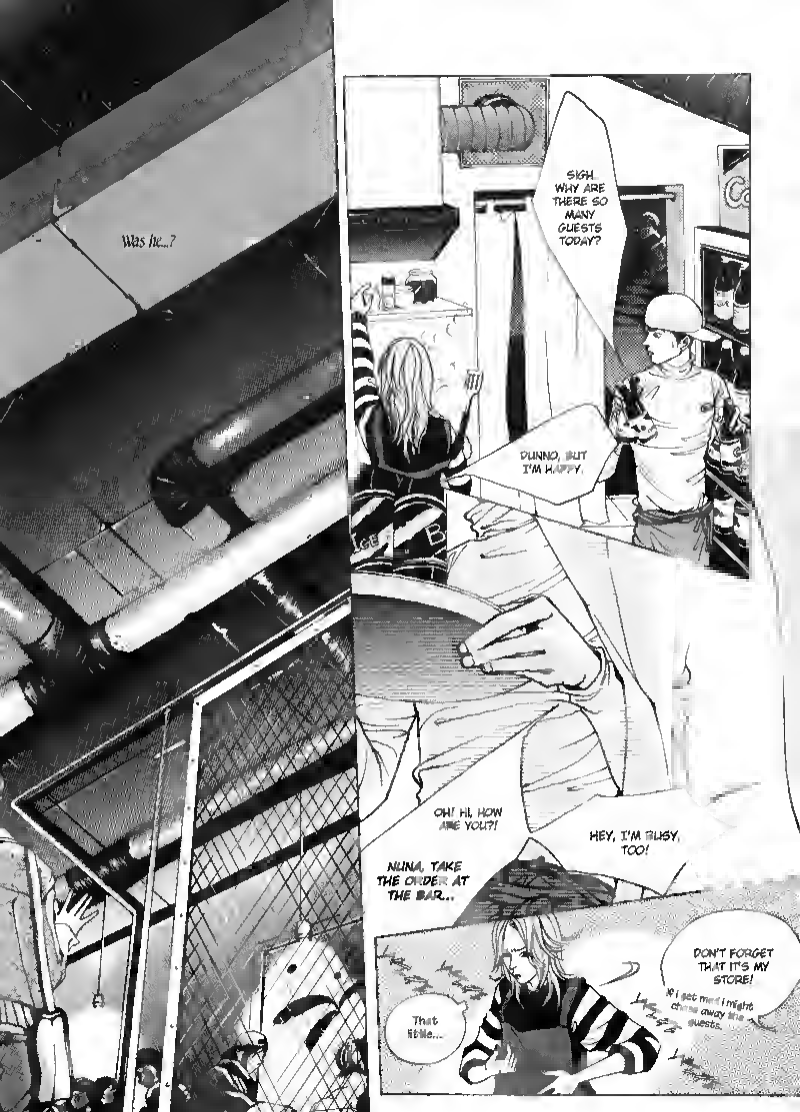
HERE ARE YOUR CIGARETTES
E-EXCUSE ME.
YES?
DO YOU ONLY PLAY THESE KINDS OF SONGS HERE...?

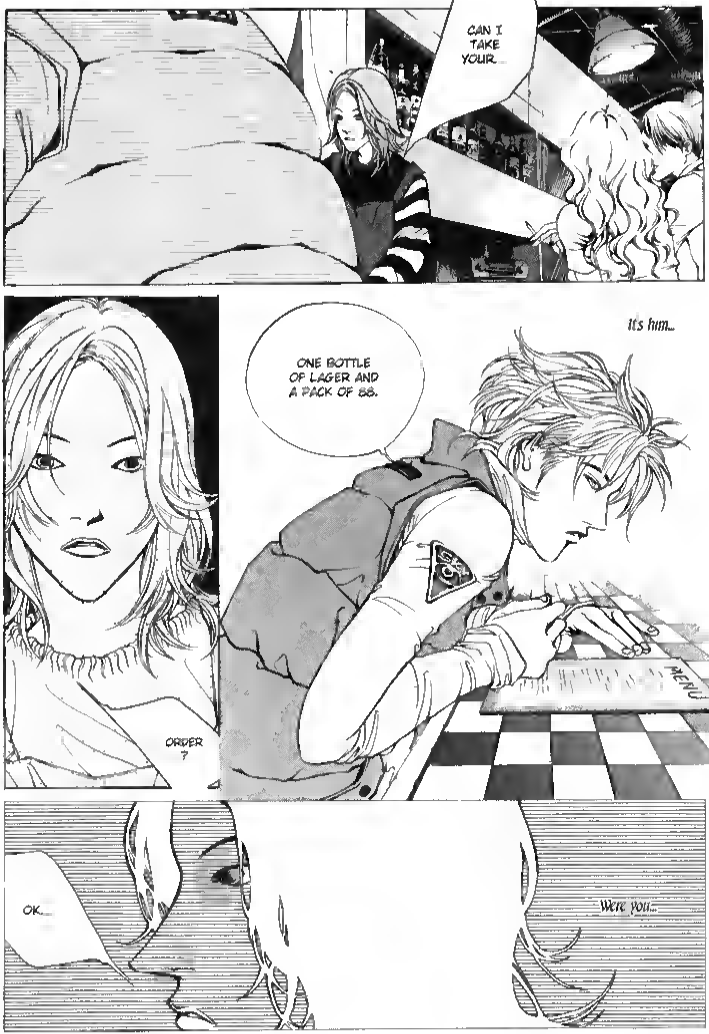
OH! IT'S A LITTLE LOUD. ISN'T IT? WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUGGEST ANY SONGS...?
NO... I ONLY SAID THAT JUST BECAUSE...
HZ4
just now...?
At that time, that guy .. might have said something ... or he might not have. But...
But that expression surely said ... something...

...saying...
I DON'T LIKE BOB MARLEY
I THOUGHT YOU LIKED HIM
IT'S JUST THAT WELL, I DON'T FEEL LIKE LISTENING TO HIS SONGS TODAY
PPFT. NO ONE'S HELPING ME TODAY. I WANTED TO LISTEN TO SOME EXCITING SONGS BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE DIRT THANKS TO MOM...
LEE JUNGJU. YOU THINK BOB MARLEY IS EXCITING...?

STOP TOUCH
Nuna♥ you don't have a fever...right? You should stop by the psychologist's office next time.
#Nuna: Way for younger brother to address older sister.
NO...IT'S NOT THAT IT JUST
WHAT IS EXCITING IF REGGAE ISN'T? NUNA, DID SOMETHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU ...?

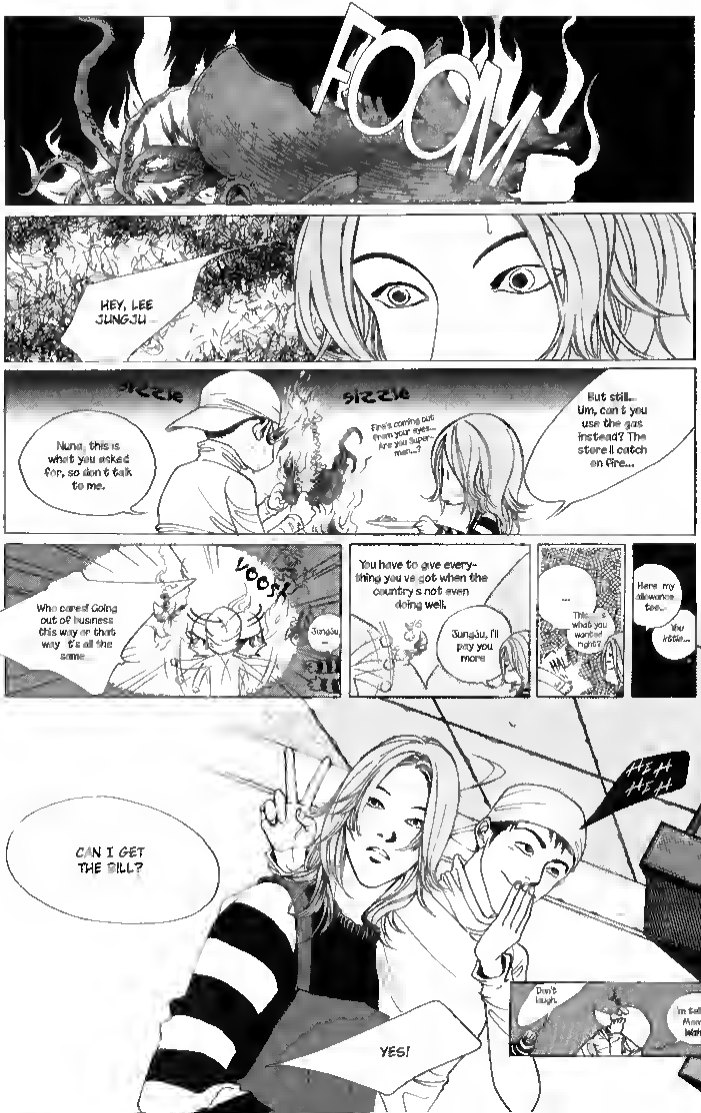
WAITER, COULD YOU GET US TWO MORE BEERS?
It just...
OH! YES! NUNA, JUST A SEC--
It just...
seemed a little sad...
Was he also... like that back then...?


Was it...?
SIGH. WHY ARE THERE SO MANY GUESTS TODAY?
DUNNO, BUT I'M HAPPY.
OH! HI, HOW ARE YOU?!
HEY, I'M BUSY, TOO!
NUNA, TAKE THE ORDER AT THE BAR...
That fit Me...
DON'T FORGET THAT IT'S MY STORE!
If I get mad I might chase away the guests.


CAN I TAKE YOUR...
ORDER ?
ONE BOTTLE OF LAGER AND A PACK OF 88.
It's him...
MENU
OK...
Were you...

...also
like that back then...?
POWER
HUH? WHAT? WHY ISN'T THE MUSIC COMING OUT?
DID IT BREAK?
What happened...?
WHAT'S UP WITH THIS? HOW DO YOU DRINK WITHOUT MUSIC? IT'S NO FUN.
EVERYONE, I'M SORRY.

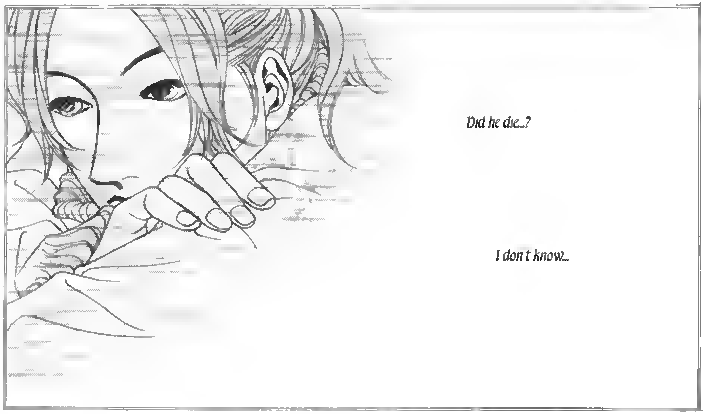
THE SPEAKERS ARE BROKEN. BESIDES, SOMETIMES YOU NEED TIME TO YOURSELF WITHOUT THE MUSIC
ESPECIALLY SINCE IT'S POISON TO THOSE WHO ARE SAD..
WELL, INSTEAD THE APPETIZERS ARE ON US
YAY
YAY
YEAH THAT'S TRUE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I NEED MUSIC TO FEEL BETTER.
BUT I LIKE MUSIC

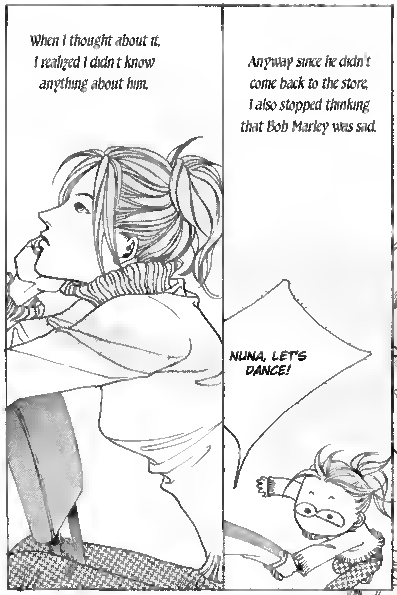

FOOM
HEY, LEE JUNGJU
SIZZLE
SIZZLE
Nuna, this is what you asked for, so don't talk to me.
Fire's coming out from your eyes... Are you Super man...?
But still... Um, can't you use the gas instead? The stone'll catch on fire...
Who cares! Going out of business this way or that way it's all the same
VOOSH
Jungju ...
You have to give everything you've got when the country's not even doing well.
Jungju, I'll pay you more
...
This what you wanted right?
HA!
Here my allowance too...
Why little...
CAN I GET THE BILL?
HEHEHEH
Don't laugh.
I'm selling Mona. Wah!
YES!

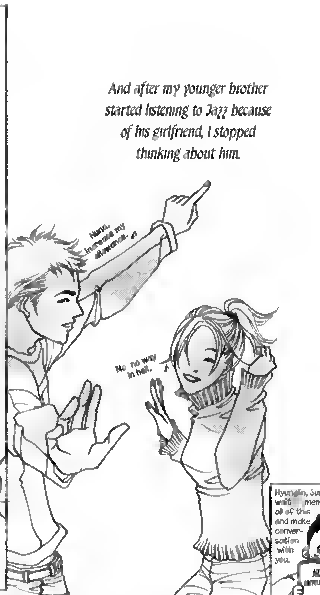
IT'S $4.10
SO I'LL GET THE CHANGE FROM YOUR $10...
EXCUSE ME...

I CAME HERE ONCE BEFORE. DO YOU REMEMBER ME, BY ANY CHANCE?
MY MEMORY'S PRETTY GOOD
HERE'S THE CHANGE
EXCUSE ME FOR SAYING THIS BUT IF YOU LIKE THE MUSIC AT OUR PLACE, COME AGAIN. IT'S BETTER TO COME WHEN WE'RE NOT BUSY. MY YOUNGER BROTHER HATES HAVING THE APPETIZERS ON US
After that, he went out the door with a small smile, but he never came back all throughout that December.

Once again, the streets started shaking with the happy atmosphere from celebrating the end of another year.
And along with that, the store became busy and my thoughts of him faded little by little.
Then, sometimes, when my younger brothers in happy spirits and dancing to Bob Marleys songs, I casually think of him...


Did he die..?
I don't know..


When I thought about it, I realized I didn't know anything about him.
Anyway since he didn't come back to the store, I also stopped thinking that Bob Marley was sad.
NUNA, LET'S DANCE!


And after my younger brother started listening to Jazz because of his girlfriend, I stopped thinking about him.
Nuna, I'm making my diamonds..
No, no way in hell..
Hyemin, Just you wait. I memorize all of this and make conversation with you.

That is until I saw him again that afternoon.
HEY! ARE THEY STARTING A FIGHT OVER THERE?
TEX
SHOP
Oh, I'm sorry.
LET'S GO WATCH!

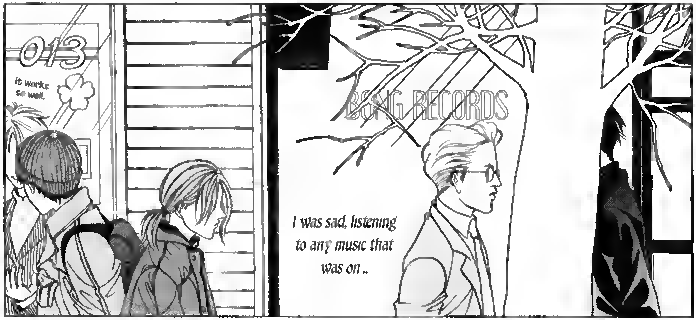
Oh, no!
It's him!
HEY! CALM DOWN!
COME TO YOUR SENSES, YOU BASTARD!
HEY! STOP!
THAT BITCH ISN'T ANYTHING AMAZING. DON'T DO THIS FOR HER...!
DON'T TALK ABOUT HER LIKE THAT!

I wanted to tell him...

...that I know...
...how hard...
...how sad...
...how painful...
...it...
...is...

I wanted to tell him...
a year ago when they died.
...that the view of my back was like that too...

They had a lonely smile like yours...



But they all left me..

Dont take
responsibility for them...
So long...
you and I...
BUNG REC
IT'S THAT
MUSIC .
So long...

" Don't take responsibility for them...
So long ... you and I... So long..."

So long... fin

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 3 - Crazy Guy

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Proofread by Sophendo|bot

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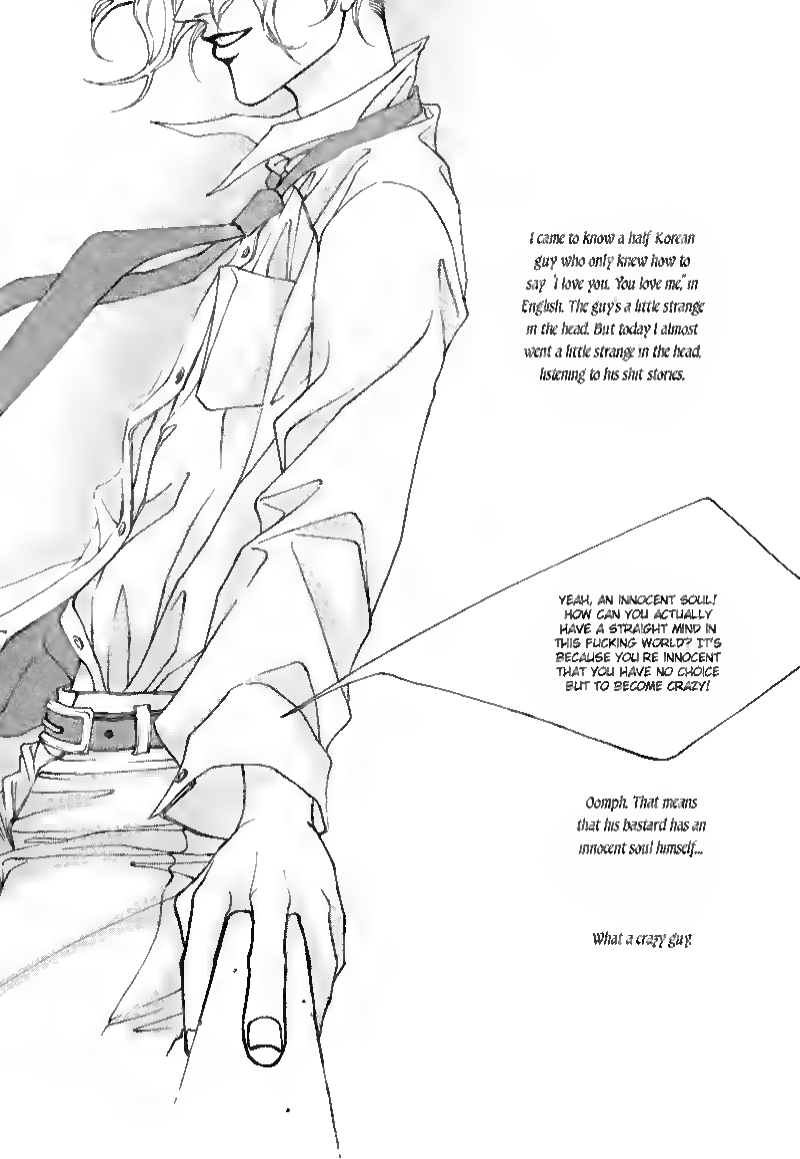
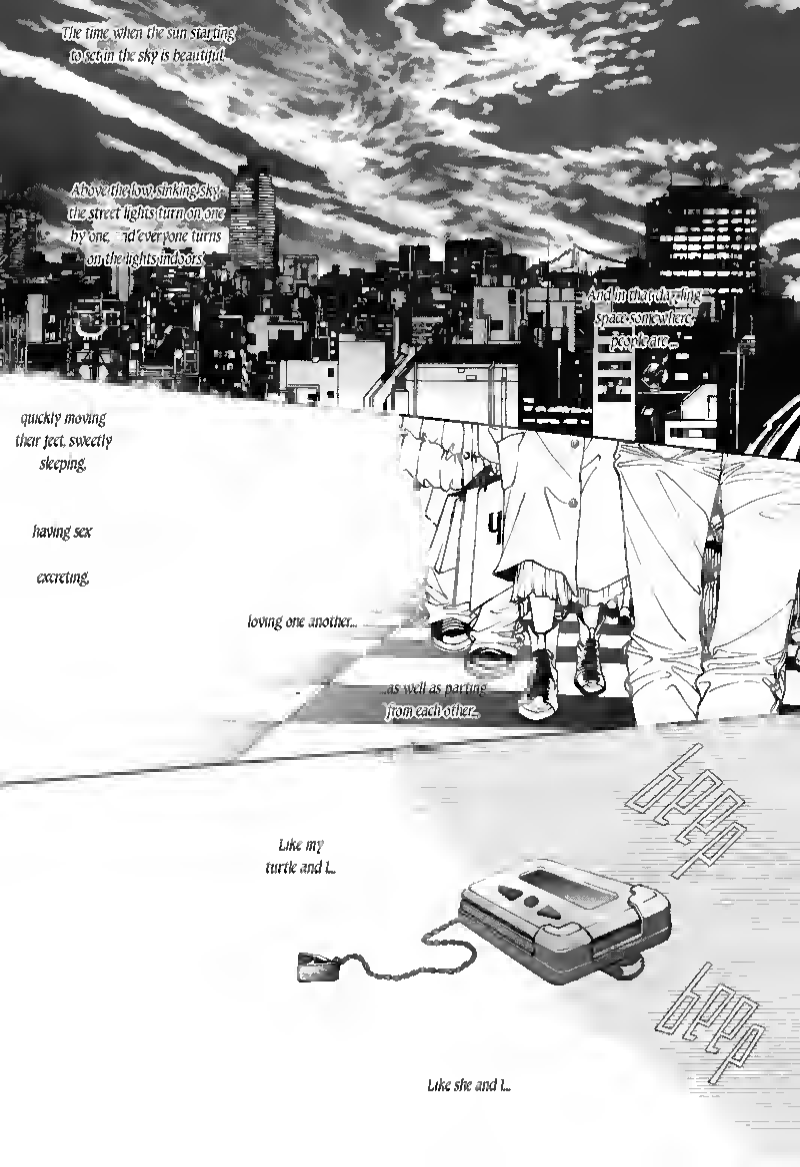
03 Crazy Guy


I came to know a half Korean guy who only knew how to say "I love you. You love me," in English. The guy's a little strange in the head. But today I almost went a little strange in the head, listening to his shit stories.
YEAH, AN INNOCENT SOUL! HOW CAN YOU ACTUALLY HAVE A STRAIGHT MIND IN THIS FUCKING WORLD? IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE INNOCENT THAT YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BECOME CRAZY!
Oomph. That means that his bastard has an innocent soul himself...
What a crazy guy.


The time when the sun starting to set in the sky is beautiful.
Above the long sinking sky, the street lights turn on one by one. And everyone turns on the lights indoors.
And in that glowing space somewhere, people are...
quickly moving their feet, sweetly sleeping,
having sex
excreting,
loving one another...
...as well as parting from each other...
Like my turtle and I...
Like she and I...

Yesterday, the turtle that I had died. It wouldn't eat anything for a week and so like a stone piece in front of an ancient palace, it didn't even tremble but finally died.
To be honest rather than being sad I was surprised.
How would I deal with it...? I thought of flushing it down the toilet but that made me feel uneasy...
One way or the other. I had been somewhat attached to it...

FIRST
MESSAGE
So, when I met
her today I wanted to
discuss this with her.
In any case, it...
IT'S ME. HEY, I...
CAN'T COME TODAY.
I, UM THAT IS...

...was her
present to me.
I'M SORRY

CLICK
I kind of...
...knew...
...that she was getting tired of living with me...
...ever since a few days ago
Little by little...

...the turtle died.
Little by little, it had
refused to eat.
In the same way, she
must have been
abandoning me little
by little, every day...

I'm not sad

BONG
It's just that I
have to go back to
the past where she
didn't exist

Going out alone, passing by an empty phone booth with extra change, taking care of the dead turtle alone...
I have to be in pain alone for a while...
I've always been like that...
IT'S THAT MUSIC...
...as if I'm stuck in the past.
BONE RECORDS
Am I...
...stuck in the past...?

YOU BASTARD! YOU STILL DON'T GET IT!
PUNCH!
PUNCH!
BAM
LOOK HE, YOU FUCKING BASTARD! ARE YOU GENERAL CHOI HUH? HOW DARE YOU TREAT YOOK HOLY UPPERCLASSMEN LIKE ROCKS [redacted]
HEH
HEH
LOOK AT THIS GUY. THE BASTARD'S LAUGHING. LAUGHING! HEY, ARE YOU CRAZY?
HEY, DON'T BE EASY ON HIM JUST SEND HIM TO HELL!

YOU STONE-HEADED IDIOTS! IT'S CHOI YOUNG CHOI YOUNG! LEARN IT! DO YOU EVEN HAVE THE BRAIN FOR IT?
YOU... YOU BASTARD!
OH, MY GOD!*
*Origin... ly said in English.

W-WHAT THE HELL...?
WHAT'S THAT YANKEE DOING...?

*Originally said in English.
**Kuh-yuh means "get lost."

AND ONE!*
*Phrase is spelled out in English.
THREE LOW-QUALITY PRODUCTS...
HUH? HE SPEAKS KOREAN!
...AND ONE CLOSE TO THE EXPIRATION DATE...
HUH?! HE... THAT GUY... WHAT?!

PFFT
WAVER
LOW QUALITY FOODS SHOULD HELP EACH OTHER INSTEAD OF FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER.
HUH?!

AUGH THE FUCKERS WERE KINDA STRONG...
SO WHY'D YOU BUTT IN? YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST GONE YOUR WAY
Augh- my jaw...
WHAT?! PFFT WATCH YOUR MOUTH...
YAH
HEH
YOU SAW IT RIGHT. I DO WANT TO DIE
IF IT WASN'T FOR ME, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN OFF THIS EASY! NOW THAT YOU BROUGHT IT UP, WHY ARE YOU ACTING AS IF YOU WANT TO BE BEATEN TO DEATH?

ACTUALLY, I WAS GOING TO DIE TODAY, DIE BY THEIR HANDS...
BUT SOMEONE WENT AND MESSED IT UP...
Huh?
What?

HEY, YOU WHO'S ABOUT TO EXPIRE. YOU TASTE SO BAD AFTER ALL. YOU'VE DEFINITELY GONE BAD...
YOH BASTARD!
MAN
OK, I'VE DECIDED
SINCE I MESSED IT UP, I'LL CLEAN IT UP, OK?

OK! LET'S GO!
turn
HEY!
W-WHERE ARE YOU GOING...?
Did I meant another crazy guy...?
YOU MIGHT NOT CARE BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO GO TO HELL; BUT I DO! I'M GOING TO LIVE UNTIL I SMEAR MY SHIT ON THE WALLS, OK?
YAH
THEREFORE, I AM!
BILLOW BILLO

IS THE FOOD THAT GOOD?
OF COURSE! WHAT'S MORE DELICIOUS IN THIS WORLD THAN DDUKBOKGI* AND SOONDAE*?
ANYWAY, THIS ODAENG* SOUP'S TASTE IS FANTASTIC
HEY OLD MAN, CAN I GET ONE MORE BOWL OF SOUP?
meili
Ha ha...

*Ddukbokgi: a pan-fried Korean dish of sliced rice cake with meat, vegetables, and seasoning
*Soondae: a type of Korean food similar to sausages
*Odaeng: boiled fish paste

What did I do?
DID YOU THINK THE KID WOULD TURN OUT RIGHT WHEN HIS FATHER'S RARELY HOME FOR TEN DAYS EVERY MONTH?
IT'S NOT TIME FOR VACATION, IS IT? WHAT ABOUT YOU, THEN?! YOU'RE NOT AT HOME ALL DAY BECAUSE OF THE HOSPITAL. THAT'S WHY HE'S LIKE THAT. STAY HOME FOR CHANGE!
I WON'T DO THAT!
THEN, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
Then...
Then, what do you do, you ask?
It's very simple.
Don't fight or blame each other pretending to be worried about me...
It's that simple.

So simple...
HOLD
START
WHAT?
HEY, CRAZY GUY— YOU MUST HAVE EATEN ALL YOU CAN IF YOU'RE NOW THINKING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE. I'M GOING TO PASS. EAT ALL YOU WANT.
THEN...
THEY SAY THAT THE COLOR COMES BACK TO A DEAD PERSON'S CHEEK AFTER HE EATS! EAT. EAT. WHO KNOWS? WITH YOUR PUDGY FACE, YOU MIGHT EVEN MEET SOMEONE FOR YOU TO GO DOWN THE ROAD TO HELL FOR ETERNITY.

GET YOUR FACE OUT OF THE WAY. IT LOOKS LIKE IT SAW SOME SHIT.
I MIGHT JUST GO TO HELL FIRST BECAUSE YOU'RE GIVING ME INDIGESTION.
I GOT IT, SO JUST KEEP ON EATING, YOU PIG BASTARD!
"You're going to eat more?"

*Oppa: a girl's way of addressing a close older guy...sometimes older brother.
**Jaesa: an event at a Korean funeral where the living prepare food on a table to calm the dead.

ARE YOU GOING TO PERFORM A JAESA** WITH THAT FOOD? WHY AREN'T YOU EATING...? ARE YOU MAD, BY ANY CHANCE, BECAUSE I CALLED YOU A PIG? IF YOU'RE MAD ABOUT THAT, THEN YOU REALLY ARE A PIG, YUP!

PAK LEE
RESTAURANT
HUH? IT'S RAINING!
IT WAS CLEAR UP TILL NOW AND NOW IT'S RAINING ...?
HEY, COME ON
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

HEY!
JUST FOLLOW ME!

AH, WHAT'S UP WITH THIS RAIN?! COME ON
SHIT. I'M ALL WET.
IT'S A MUSIC ROOM. IS IT OK TO COME IN?
DON'T WORRY. NO ONE COMES AT THIS TIME.

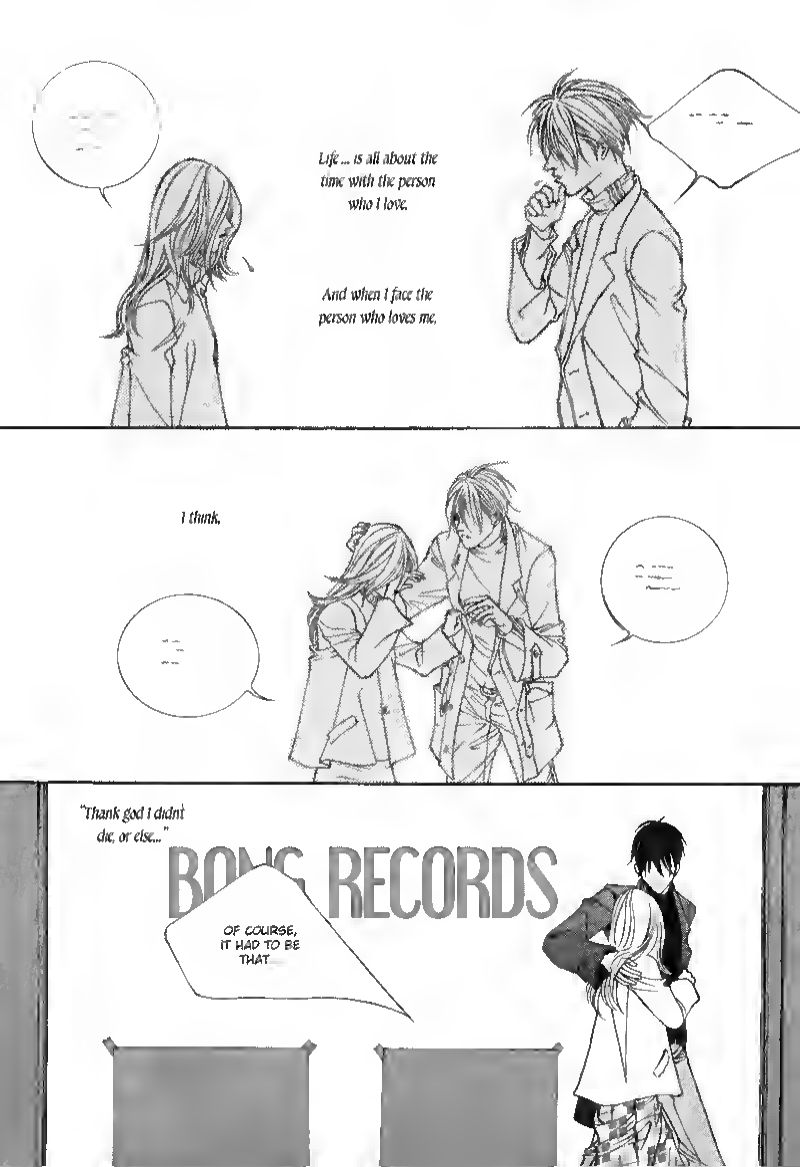
ding
HEY, DON'T MESS AROUND, OR YOU MIGHT BREAK SOMETHING DRY YOUR CLOTHES OVER HERE

The noisy sound of rain
the quiet piano melody
and his low voice...
—LISED TO SAY THAT THIS WAS NICE TO LISTEN TO ON A RAINY DAY—

WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?
WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, DIDN'T WE PLAY A LOT OF THOSE GAMES?
IF A MAGICIAN CAME ONE DAY AND GRANTED US THREE WISHES, WHAT WOULD YOU ASK FOR...?
I wanted to be healthy. But that's just one out of three wishes. What about you, Oppa..?"
MY FIRST WISH IS FOR HER TO COME BACK TO LIFE.
THE SECOND IS FOR ME TO LIVE HAPPILY WITH HER FOREVER AND EVER...

AND ... THE THIRD ...
... IS FOR YOU TO NOT DIE
The rain was noisy...
EVEN THOUGH WE'VE ONLY MET FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY. IF YOU DIE I'LL BE VERY SAD. AND IT'S NOT JUST ME. THE PEOPLE CLOSE TO YOU WILL BE, TOO...
the piano was quiet...
and ... he talked shit in his low tone voice.
I'M SORRY FOR NOT KEEPING MY PROMISE...

BUT, YOU KNOW...
IT'S REALLY HARD... TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW DYING... SHIT
I couldnt die. Like he wished,I wouldnt...
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SONG, ISN'T IT?
And...
JIYOUNG!
And sometimes...
IT WAS ON MY MIND FOR A WHILE. THANK GOD WE MET...


Life ... is all about the time with the person who I love.
And when I face the person who loves me,
I think,
"Thank god I didn't die, or else..."
BONG RECORDS
OF COURSE, IT HAD TO BE THAT...

Book
I would have depressed some people...
IF THEY HAVE A DECENT FACE THEY'D HAVE A FOX SCARF* I WAS GOING TO ASK HIM TO COME IN FOR TEA IF HE STOOD THERE FOR ANOTHER FIVE MINU-TES.— FFFT.
HYUNGLIN!
HYUNG-LIN?
HYUNGLIN, LET'S TURN ON SOME SETEN. I'M FEELING DOWN.
sigh~

*Fox scarf, meaning women.

"It's because you're innocent that you have no choice but to become crazy!"

Crazy Guy fin

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 4 - Feel So Good

Scanned by Totochan

Translated by Skyami0830

Proofread by Sophendo|bot

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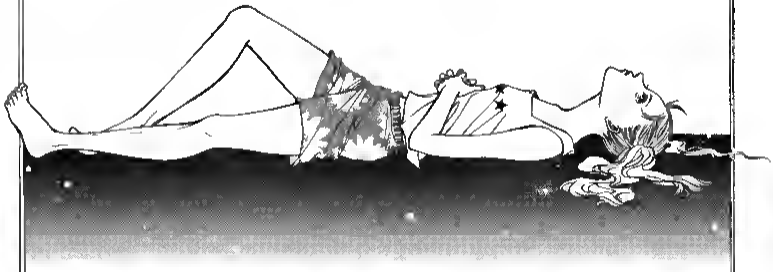
Feel So Good

I was fifteen
that summer

Mom was crying in
the next room



On the TV that's been on
since morning, a man
started to cry quietly

The crying in the room next to
mine and the crying on the TV

began to form an
amazing duet

Then, all of a sudden, the
ceiling turned gray, and I
thought,

"I want a jukebox"

HUFF
HUFF
Like a habit, people often say,
"The city is too dreary, too crowded. I really don't like it."
HUFF HUFF
EXCUSE ME
but I like the city
I like the buildings that line up in a row, the cars that densely crowd the streets, the clamor of the people in all their selfishness and formalities, the busy crowds that come and go.

COFFEE & BEER
And in that bustling space, like some booby trap or a gift from the city,
an unforeseen encounter awaits me
HUFF
HUFF
A chance encounter indeed!

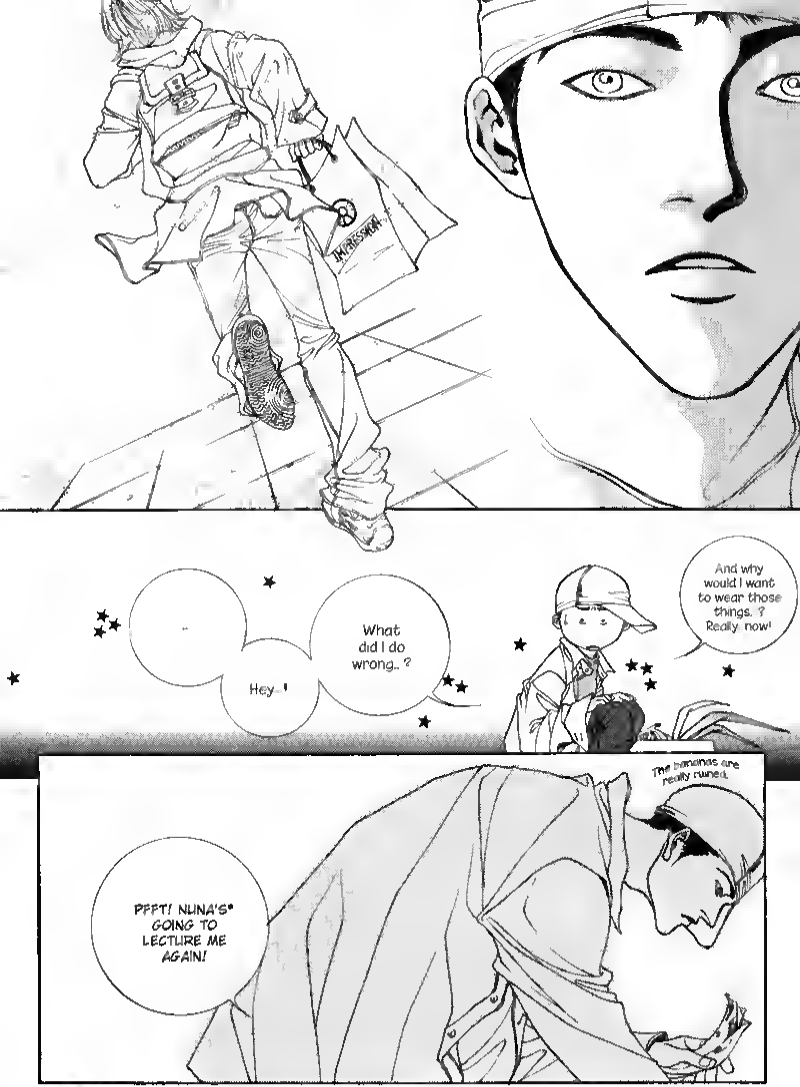
Or something like this
OH, NO!
AIIEEE
This girl
OH, MY. I'M SO SORRY!
is the one from the record store
WHAT? THE BANANAS ARE RUINED! OH, NO! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW?!

I'M SO SORRY...
TURN
UM... THAT'S OK, BUT ... SHOULDN'T YOU GO PICK THOSE UP FIRST?

IMPRESSION

STOP

T-THEY'RE NOT MINE. I MEAN, IT'S A MATTER OF TASTE. SO, IF YOU'RE GOING TO LAUGH, THEN I THINK YOU GOT SOME PERSONALITY ISSUES. THEN AGAIN, ISN'T IT BETTER TO BE HONEST TO YOURSELF?
DIDN'T YOU THINK THAT SOME PEOPLE MIGHT WANT TO TRY THEM ON?


..
Hey..!
What did I do wrong..?
And why would I want to wear those things..? Really now!
PFFT! NUNA'S* GOING TO LECTURE ME AGAIN!
The bananas are really ruined.

<*NOTE: NUNA IS A GUY'S WAY OF ADDRESSING AN OLDER SISTER IN THIS CASE.>

GRIN
PFFT!

She's from the record store, huh

AUGH, I'M GOING TO DIE
New
GIRL, I DEFINITELY TOLD YOU TO COME HERE BY THREE-THIRTY...
Oh, my!
ha
ha
Every time I look at myself, I realize once again that I'm so beautiful!!
ha
ha
HUFF HUFF HUFF
BOOM

I almost had a heart attack...
GIRL! DON'T OPEN THE DOOR SO SUDDENLY! AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?!
TURN
I'M SORRY!
IMPRESSION
I'M REALLY SORRY I'M LATE, BUT I HAVE MY OWN REASONS FOR IT. AND I SHOULD STOP TALKING NOW...
DON'T MAKE ME DO THESE KINDS OF CHORES AGAIN!
<NOTE. *UNNI IS A GIRL'S WAY OF ADDRESSING AN OLDER WOMAN OR SISTER >
HEY, DID SOMETHING HAPPEN...?
NO!
Unni*
Yes? What? W-what's wrong? Tell me everything, OK?
Isn't my aunt scary when she's mad?
Oh, my! Oh, my! What am I going to do?!
WOOSH
Hyunglin, let's talk when I get back!
Good luck on your blind date.

ESSION
AH!
IMPRESSION
I'M SURE ... THAT WAS HIM...
IMPRESSION
SO, AFTER SOME POEM POPPED INTO YOUR MIND AND CAPTIVATED YOU, YOU DECIDED TO SPREAD THE BANANAS ON THE FLOOR, AND THEN YOU WALKED ON THEM

THEN, ON YOUR WAY HERE, SOME HUNGRY MONKEYS THAT HAD ESCAPED FROM THE ZOO ATTACKED YOU
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. WAS IT THE FIRST STORY OR THE SECOND?
Jungsu
I'M TAKING IT OUT OF YOUR PAY.
the prices of fruits these days are outrageous
NUNA...

I THINK I'M IN LOVE...
WHO IS IT THIS TIME?
JUN JIHYUN? AYUMI?
LEE HYORI?
LEONARDO DICAPRIO?
REEVE TYLER? WHO? WHO IS IT?
Ah! I don't know. I like all of them, too, but.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE ACTION! ONLY THE BRAVE WILL GET THE BEAUTIES! I'VE GOT TO STRIKE IT WHILE THE IRON'S HOT!
SCRAPPP
HEY, WE'RE ABOUT TO OPEN. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
NUEE NUEE
I'M BUYING A CD.
WISH ME GOOD LUCK
Hmp
FWip

He needn good luck to get a CD..?
김승표
CD
Whir
YEAH, THIS MUSIC'S SURELY THE BEST KIND TO LISTEN TO WHEN YOU'RE DEPRESSED
CHUEE Mi
Jude
HELLO

Song Records
It's him!
NUDGE
IMP
WHERE IS
...IT...?
Ha! She's outer with her hair up! Ah, so cute...

Yeah, since I came all this way,
I need to give it a try.
FLASH
I was born a man I need to start taking my sword out...
...and cut a turnip at least*!
E...

(*NOTE: AN OLD SAYING IN KOREA THAT STATES THAT WHEN YOU START SOMETHING YOU SHOULD FINISH IT.)
EXCUSE ME...
LIM...
I have to cut myself some courage...
shut! say it already, Lee Jungju!

gulp
say it!
I want to go out with you!
I want to go out with you!
I want to go out with you!
I... I... I...
say it!
FLATTER

...
ARE YOU GETTING PAID TOO MUCH? TELL ME, AND I'LL LOWER IT.
We already have those at the store.
...I COULDN'T SAY IT.
What's the hack...?
Huh? What? Say it properly, so I can understand you!
YOU KNOW THE RECORD STORE THAT JUST OPENED NEARBY? YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IT SINCE WE WENT THERE A FEW TIMES. WELL, I WENT TO SAY THAT I WANTED TO GO OUT WITH HER, BUT...
THE WORDS WOULDN'T COME OUT OF MY MOUTH.
SO THE GOOD LUCK YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEFORE WAS ABOUT THE GIRL AT THE RECORD STORE! THAT'S WHY...
I I-I I...
I see.
All I ended up saying was that I wanted to buy a CD!
Only I would understand that a looker like you would act like this.
TSK TSK

One day after he said that

Two days

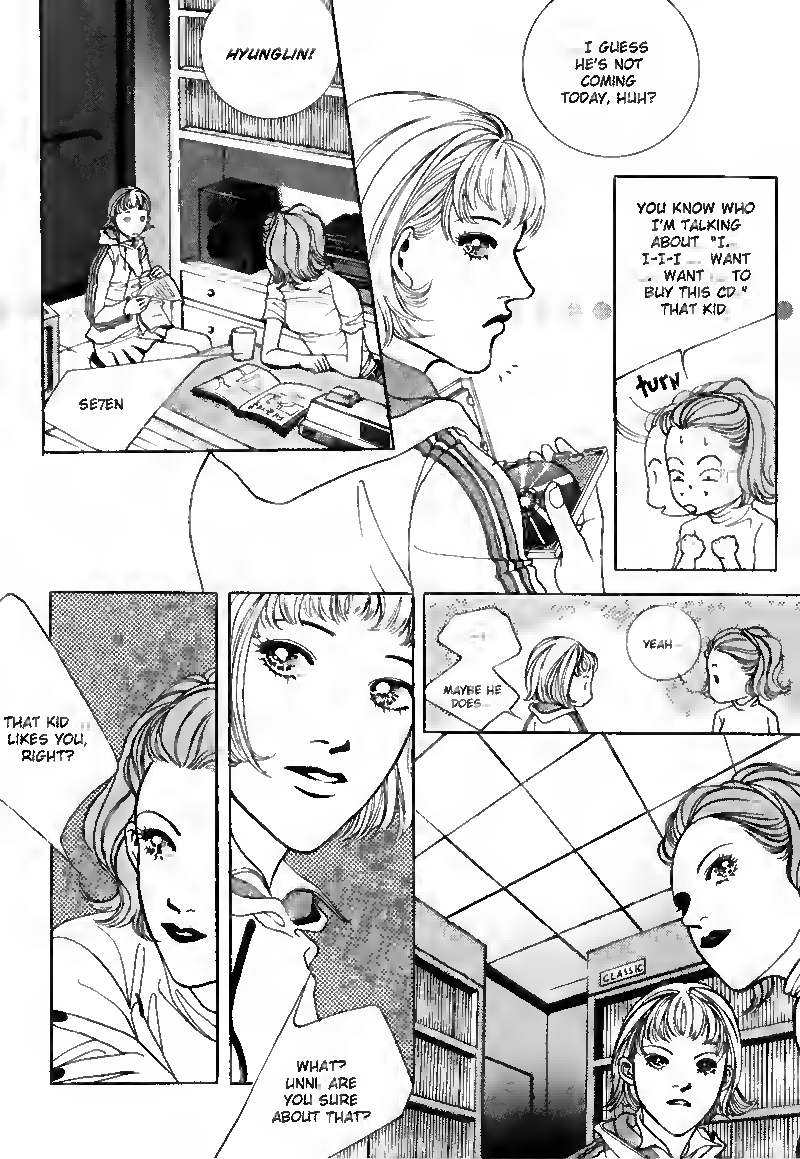
Three days

Four days

<*NOTE SUL LUNDO AN OLD KOREAN POP SINGER >

<*NOTE FOX SCARF MEANING WOMEN >

OF COURSE, IT JUST HAD TO TURN OUT THAT WAY IF THEY HAVE A DECENT FACE, THEY'D HAVE A FOX SCARF*. I WAS GOING TO ASK HIM TO COME IN FOR TEA IF HE STOOD THERE FOR ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES PFFT
Hyungjin, let's turn on some saxes. I'm feeling down. Hyungjin?


HYUNGJIN!
SE7EN
I GUESS HE'S NOT COMING TODAY, HUH?
YOU KNOW WHO I'M TALKING ABOUT "I... I-I-I... WANT... WANT... TO BUY THIS CD." THAT KID
turn
YEAH...
MAYBE HE DOES...
CLASSIC
THAT KID LIKES YOU, RIGHT?
WHAT? UNNI, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

Today, I'll do it!
*Note: Aja word of encouragement. Like our "you can do it"
MONEY MO
I'm sure of it
~Aja! Aja! Aja! *
IMPRE
Positively
Hm Where was t..?
M-MISS HYUNGLIN?!

WOW, THERE'S A LOT OF STARS TONIGHT!
IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO COME OUT HERE.
MY PARENTS DIVORCED WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN. THREE DAYS BEFORE THAT, MY FATHER LEFT THE HOUSE AND SHUT HIMSELF IN THE LIBRARY...
CHUCK MANGIONE! THE ONE YOU FIRST BOUGHT!!
Ah, yes. Of course... It's good...
OH, YEAH! DO YOU LIKE THAT KIND OF MUSIC?
WHICH ONE...?
Didn't even break open the packaging.

I LIVED IN A SMALL TOWN BECAUSE OF MY FATHER'S WORK THE RUMORS SPREAD SO QUICKLY.
THE WHISPERING WAS AWFUL... IN THE END, MY MOM AND I HAD TO ESCAPE AND COME HERE TO SEOUL..
I wanted a jukebox, one that didn't have any sad music but filled with only happy music
I wanted that kind of happy life that the happy music depicted
THIS MIGHT SOUND STRANGE, BUT IT WAS NATURAL FOR MY FATHER TO LEAVE MY MOM...
IF HE HADN'T, MY FATHER WOULD PROBABLY HAVE GONE CRAZY... I CAN UNDERSTAND HIM.
Then again, isn't understanding and forgiving two different things ?
DID MY FATHER DO THE RIGHT THING AT THAT TIME...?
Maybe that's why Father looks more peaceful today than when I was fifteen

MISS HYUNGJIN! LET'S... LET'S... I... I-I...
don't have a CD to give you right now...
LET'S DATE!!
I'M A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SORT OF GUY, BUT I'M CONFIDENT THAT I CAN ERASE ALL THOSE BAD MEMORIES OF YOURS
SO, FORGET ABOUT YOUR PARENTS' PROBLEMS AND FORGIVE THEM... FORGIVE THEM...
I knew it from the start...
That good feeling I got... from you...
was a booby trap...
I can hear happy music somewhere...
YEAH!!

"I went to say that I wanted to go out with her, but the words wouldn't come out of my mouth"

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 5 - Insomnia

Scanned by Totochan
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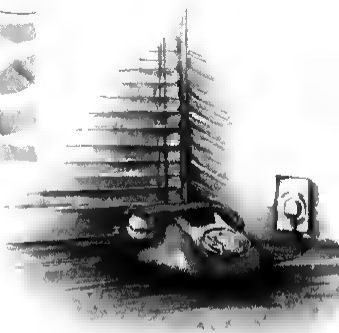
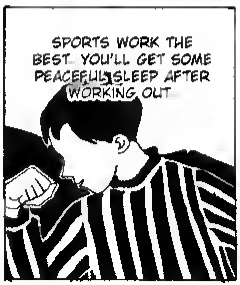
05 Insomnia

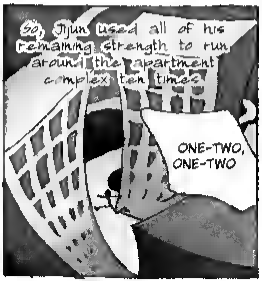
For the past three days, Jijun has not been able to sleep

No matter how hard he tried to sleep during those three days and nights, his mind was blank, and he showed no signs of sleepiness

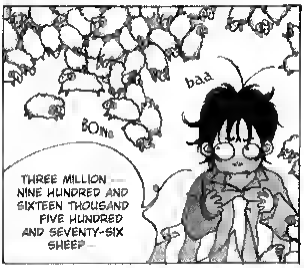


After bearing the unbearable insomnia, he decided to ask around for advice



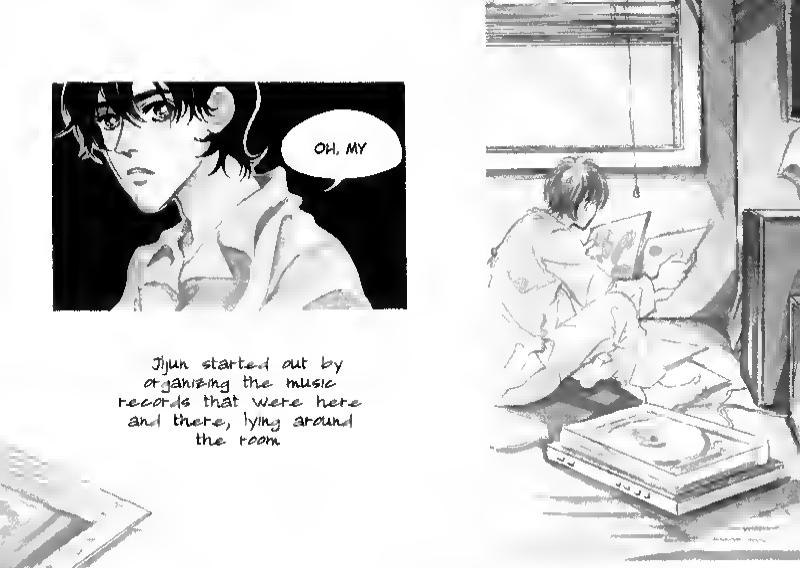


After Jijun counted to 3,916,571, he gave up because his tongue got twisted and his nerves were on end.



In the end, Jijun gave up on sleeping. Then, as he was blankly looking around the room, he realized that the room was very messy. Now that he thought about it, he realized that he hadn't cleaned the room in four days.

Jiyun started out by organizing the music records that were here and there, lying around the room



"Doesn't it have a beautiful melody?"

Jiyun laughed a short laugh, remembering what Hyukjin had said while listening to that record a few years ago on a very cold day

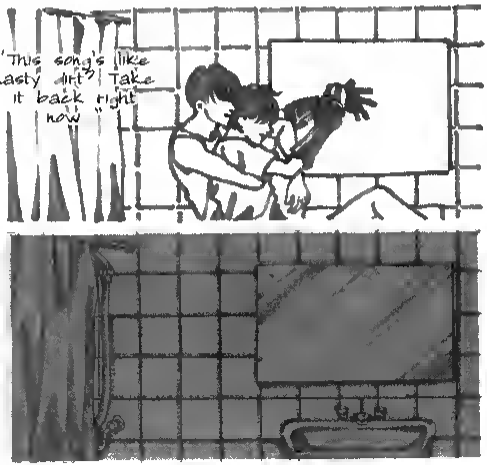
In no time at all, this low, smooth melody that Jiyun got used to was sprinkled all about the dark, gray space

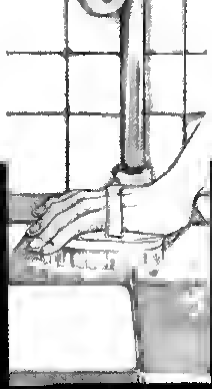
"Yeah, it sure does"

"Why are you doing something like cleaning the bathroom while listening to music this beautiful?"

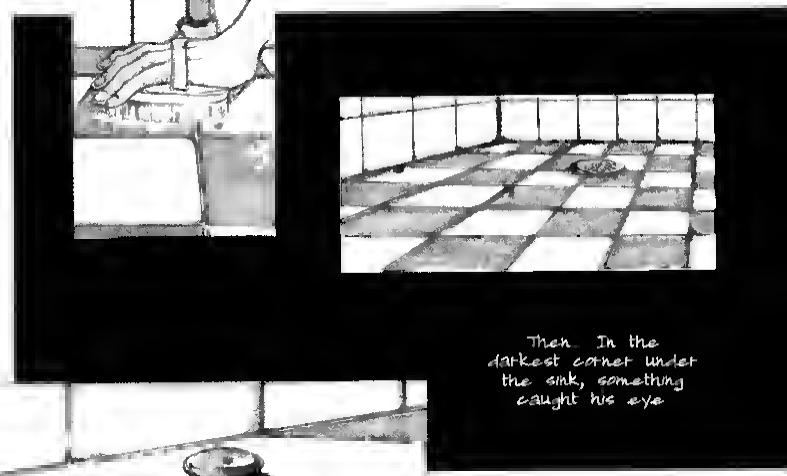
"Because I want to. This music's getting stuck in my head so easily that if I don't clean anything, I'd feel like nasty dirt is getting stuck to me. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"This song's like nasty dirt? Take it back right now."

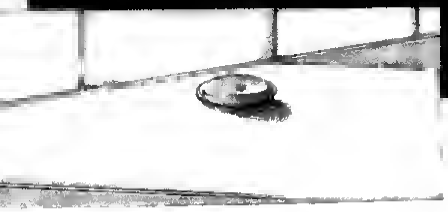




Jijun picked up the scrubber and started cleaning the floor thoroughly



Then... In the darkest corner under the sink, something caught his eye



It was something small and round with a shiny pink hue—a sleeping pill. Like some lonely and shabby bird that's been separated from its group, it had been chaotically scattered on the bathroom floor three days ago by Hyukjin

"I thought I got rid of all of these, but one was hiding here all along."

Jijun lightly placed the pill on his tongue. It tasted sweet but slightly bitter

"It doesn't taste good, so why did Hyukjin eat so many of them? He didn't even like this flavor."

Jijun spit out the pill and brushed his teeth, while he thought,

"He's an idiot. If he couldn't sleep, he should have asked me to help him sleep. Why did he go and chug an entire bottle of sleeping pills that weren't even tasty? He never even took medicine for his colds."

Jijun continued to brush his teeth. He brushed, brushed, and brushed them again. He suddenly felt something in his throat, so he spat everything out that was in his mouth. But, the pain surging from inside his chest wouldn't disappear so easily, and with time, it became worse.

Jiun thought, "Hyukjin, you should know that I can't sleep if I don't have someone beside me. Why'd you do it when you knew about that? Why ?" His tears kept flowing and didn't stop. He finally murmured,

"There won't be any sleeping today, either."

"It was something
small and round with
a shiny pink hue"

Insomnia fm

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 6 - Ember

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06 Ember

Daddy ?
Daddy
EMBER...!

THE WIND'S COLD. SO WHY ARE YOU OUT HERE?
It's suffocating inside
EMBER, IT'S TIME TO DRINK YOUR MILK.

IS... IS IT GOOD ... EMBER...?
Yes...
It's good...!
YES... YOU THINK IT'S GOOD...?

IT'S GOOD, RIGHT...?
Daddy...?
IT'S GOOD, RIGHT?!

BZZZ
Daddy ?
WHAT? GELLER, REPORT YOUR POSITION!
BZZZ

BEEP BEEP
...I'M NOT SURE. ACCORDING TO OUR CC DETECTOR,
IT'S JUST A PIECE OF GLASS, WITH... DRIED MILK STUCK TO IT...
PLUNK
WHAT? MILK? WHAT THE?! WE GOT SCARED 'CAUSE OF THAT?!
TIMOTHY JOHNSON, I ALWAYS TOLD YOU THIS WORK DOESN'T FIT YOUR PERSONALITY. RETURN TO EARTH
AND DO SOME OFFICE WORK AT THE CENTER. ALL CLEAR TO ADVANCE LIEUTENANT!
YOU BASTARD!
EVERY BODY MOVE FORWARD!

SECOND LIEUTENANT JOHNSON!
I ALSO WHOLLY AGREE WITH GELLER'S SUGGESTION GIVE IT A SERIOUS THOUGHT!
WHISTLE
GOOD ONE, SIR!
DON'T BE LIKE THAT, FELLOWS. I'M ALREADY ABOUT TO GO INSANE. WE HAD TO COME TO THIS DAMN PLANET USING OUR GOLDEN VACATION TIME JUST TO REMOVE SOME OLD DATA THAT A CRAZY SCIENTIST LEFT SOME TEN YEARS AGO...
I THOUGHT I WOULD BE AT PARADISE BEACH WITH CECIL, DRINKING COCKTAILS AND SEEING THE SUNSET...
TIMOTHY, TIMOTHY! A SETTING SUN ON PARADISE BEACH IS—

LIEUTENANT!
ANYWAY IT S A COMPUTER-GENERATED IMAGE! LOOK AT THE SKY EVERYTHING HERE IS NATURAL DON T YOU THINK THAT THIS PLACE IS MORE VALUABLE?
WHATEVER, SMARTY-PANTS AT LEAST IT'S SAFE THERE.
I ... DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE ... IT'S TOO LONELY..

AND I FEEL IT GIVES OFF _ SDME KIND OF BAD OMEN_
LIEUTENANT THE RESEARCH CENTER IS 550 YARDS AHEAD!
SHHHHHH
SHHHHHH
SHHHHHH

HEY, WHATEVER...
beep
beep
beep
beep
ALL TROOPS, HALT
ALL TROOPS HALT!
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
beep
WHAT IS IT SECOND LIEUTENANT GELLER?
LIEUTENANT GELLER!
I'M GETTING A SIGNAL OF A LIFE FORCE B-BUT--
A LIFE FORCE? BUT THE DATA--
FOOM
LIEUTENANT 12 O'CLOCK AHEAD!!
FOOM
WHAT THE HELL--?!
WHAT IS THAT--?

A GIRL...? IS IT HUMAN?
BUT WHEN WE CHECKED FROM THE MOTHER SHIP WE DIDN'T DETECT ANY SIGNALS OF LIFE.
LIEUTENANT LET'S JUST SHOOT IT! IT DDESN'T SEEM HUMAN
SHUT UP JOHNSON!
DADDY...
DADDY WON'T COME BACK... I'VE WAITED FOR SO LONG...

I'VE WAITED FOR SO LONG...
"SO long"
CHRISTOPHER JENKINSON, BORN IN ILLINOIS U.S.A. IN THE YEAR 2030. HE'S GOT THE FULL ELITE COURSE. GOT AN ENGINEERING PH.D. AT AGE TWENTY, THEN SEVEN YEARS LATER GOT APPOINTED TO BE THE LEADER OF THE GENETIC ENGINEERING TEAM ON THE EARTH UNION SCIENCE BUREAU.
SWEPT ALL THE MEDALS DURING HIS TEN YEARS OF SERVICE. THAT TEAM MOSTLY FOCUSED ON FOOD... AND THEN HE MARRIED DR. ANNA SCHWOPPE, A TEAM MEMBER. WHEN HIS WIFE DIED TWELVE YEARS LATER, HE TOOK HIS DAUGHTER AND MOVED TO THIS STAR THAT HE BOUGHT WITH ALL OF HIS AND HIS WIFE'S MONEY.
HE SENT A REPORT IN 2080, SO THAT MEANS HE WAS ALIVE 'TIL THEN—
WELL, ACCORDING TO THE GIRL HE LEFT HERE—

CRAZY BASTARD
HOW COULD HE LEAVE A DAUGHTER THIS YOUNG
THE SHOCK MUST HAVE BEEN MAJOR. SHE CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. WE SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE MEDICAL TEAM ALONG...
DAMN! ONLY HIS PROFILE FILE OPENS. THE REST WON'T BUDGE. WE CAN ONLY FIND THE DOCTOR'S RESEARCH REPORT BASE IF THESE FILES OPEN. EVEN THE PHOTOS WON'T COME UP. SHIT! OPEN, OPEN... I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE FAST!!
tap tap
WHY ARE YOU SO ANXIOUS?
tap tap
I DON'T LIKE IT HERE...! OPEN! PLEASE!!

I'M NOT ANXIOUS SIR
I'M SCARED I'M SCARED OF THIS PLACE!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE LIKE THIS, BUT KEEP IT TO YOURSELF YOU'LL ONLY AGITATE THE OTHERS
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S ANXIOUS!
KEEP WORKING!
It's been staring at everyone
OPEN PLEASE!
tap
tap

can't they see that ?!
tap
tap
tap
tap
TIMOTHY IS STRANGE.
HE'S ALWAYS STRANGE, SIR. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT WELL!
HE WAS TREMBLING SO MUCH THAT I COULDN'T BRING UP THE STUFF ABOUT THE RADIO... SO WHAT? IS IT STILL THE SAME THIS TIME?

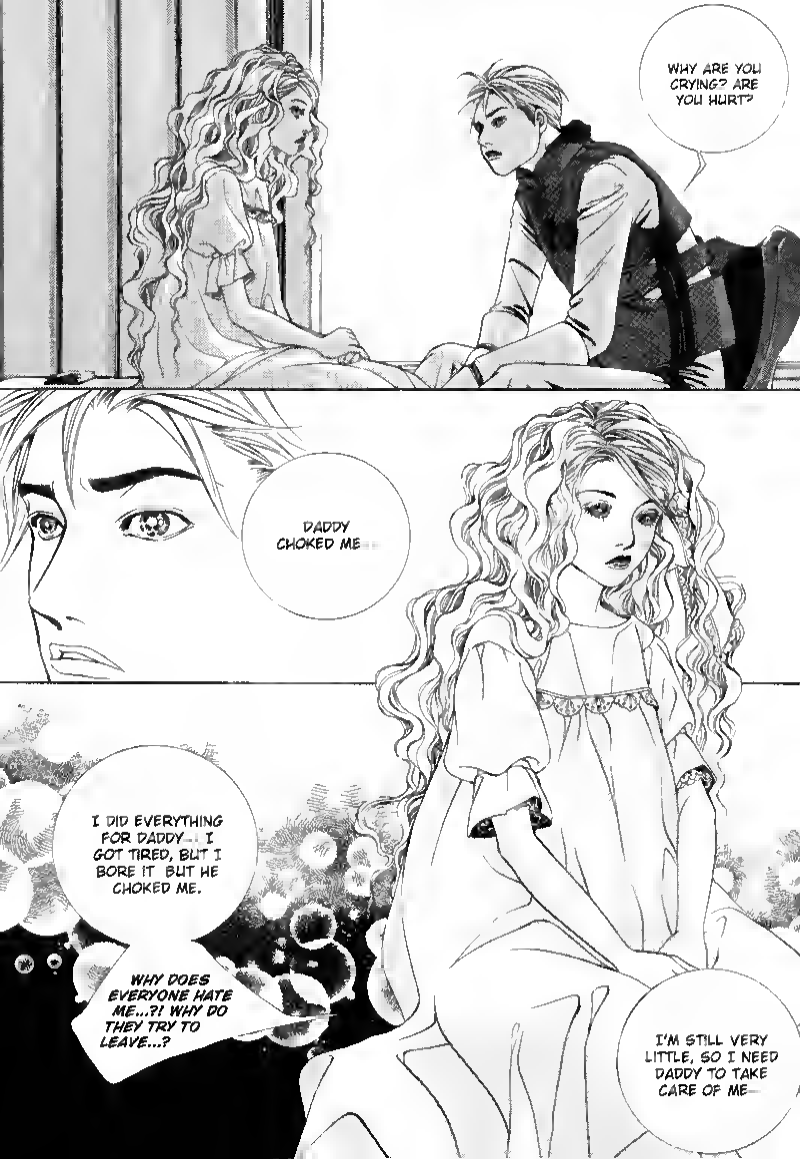
I THINK IT'S JUST A SIMPLE MAGNETIC GLITCH! WE'RE TRYING IT WITH AND WITHOUT THE WIRE, SO WE'LL HAVE CONNECTION IN NO TIME. BUT LOOK AT THE REFRIGERATOR HERE THIS WOULD LAST ONE COMPANY FOR YEARS AT LEAST!!
THERE SHOULD BE SOMETHING TO GIVE TO THE CHILD...
YOU SEEM TO LIKE IT HERE
YES, I LIKE IT. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A CLEAR AND BRIGHT SKY ON EARTH? THE NATURAL AIR, THE WIDE FIELDS WITH THE HORIZON, THE SETTING SUN... ISN'T IT PERFECT? I WISH I COULD JUST STAY BACK TO LIVE HERE
I ENVY THAT OPTIMISTIC MIND OF YOURS ANYWAY, WHERE DID ALL THESE PEOPLE GO? PATTERSON AND TAYLOR...
I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM AROUND
OH! I SENT THEM TO SCOUT THE AREA
GOOD I WAS ABOUT TO GO, TOO

I SHOULD HAVE STUDIED TO BECOME A SCIENTIST, TOO. HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU NEED TO BUY THIS KIND OF STAR? ANYWAY, THE SETTING SUN IS GREAT, DON'T YOU THINK?
I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE OF LIEUTENANT JOHNSON, BUT I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE AS FAST AS I CAN!
HUH? WHAT?! ARE YOU SCARED? YEAH? IS THAT RIGHT?
STOP IT! OR I'LL SHOOT!!
HEY! SAY SOMETHING! YOU'RE SCARED?
poke
poke
SLASH
HEY! STOP STABBING ME!!
HUH?
WH...T? TAYLOR!
thud

HEY, I TOLD YOU NOT TO TOUCH ME!
...!
ha ha
HEY, GET UP! I DIDN'T PUSH YOU. YOU FELL BY YOURSELF
TAYLOR, WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT IS...?
WHAT DO YOU ... MEAN...?!
HEY! WHY...
...ARE THERE TWO ?
다다닥

TAYLOR...?
drip
drip
UH... UH...!
Ahhhhhhhh

WHAT'S WRONG?


WHY ARE YOU CRYING? ARE YOU HURT?
DADDY CHOKED ME...
I DID EVERYTHING FOR DADDY... I GOT TIRED, BUT I BORE IT BUT HE CHOKED ME.
WHY DOES EVERYONE HATE ME...?! WHY DO THEY TRY TO LEAVE...?
I'M STILL VERY LITTLE, SO I NEED DADDY TO TAKE CARE OF ME...

DON'T WORRY!
IT WON'T BE LIKE THAT ANYMORE. I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU FROM NOW ON!
SO DON'T CRY! OK? LET'S MOVE TO A BETTER PLACE TOGETHER!
YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF ME...?
THEN, YOU'LL BE MY DADDY FROM NOW ON...?
YOU CAN CALL ME THAT IF YOU WANT! HERE. LET'S DRINK SOME OF THIS FIRST IT'S MILK

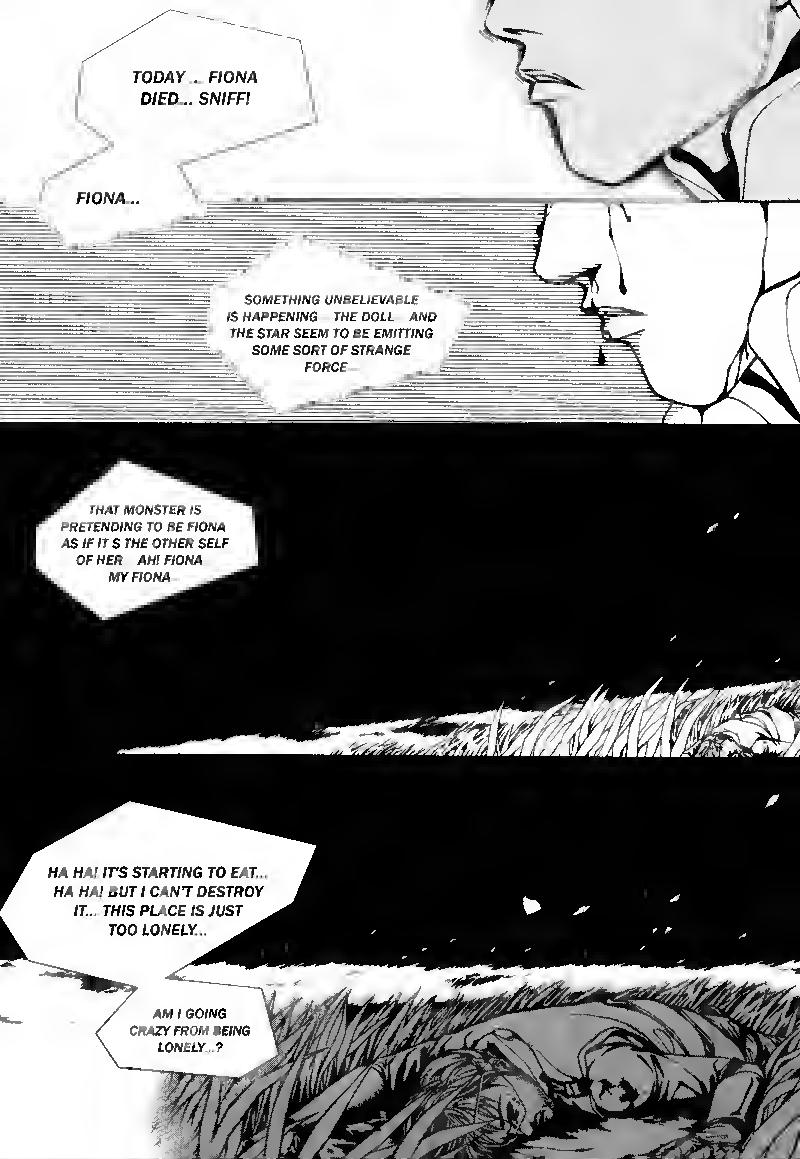
YOU WON'T GET MAD IF I DRINK IT? DADDY GOT MAD...
GET MAD? I WON'T GET MAD — OH, YOU POOR THING!
IS IT GOOD?
YES, IT'S GOOD.
DADDY...
huff
huff
huff

CRUNCH
huff
huff
huff
huff
!

YOU...
YOU'RE DR. JENKINSON!
YOU KILLED TAYLOR AND PATTERSON
RUN AWAY!
RUN...

DING
DONE!
HELLO CASANOVA JOHNSON. PLEASE INPUT THE CORRECT PASSWORD IN THE SELECTION
tap
tap
tap
I WILL WAIT JUST A MOMENT
LOADING THE DATA. PLEASE WAIT.
FASTER, FASTER! I DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ANYMORE!!
tap
tap
What the...
LET'S SEE...
SKIP
LOADING
THERE'S NO BAR, AND WHAT'S THIS SKIP BUTTON? THERE'S NO FILE NAME, EITHER...
FROM NOW ON THIS IS OUR HOME
NO MORE BURDENSOME CLOTHES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
WHAT? IT'S A HOME VIDEO!

IT'S HIM. WHERE THE HELL IN THE UNIVERSE DID HE DIE AND BECOME A GHOST? HE SCARED THE SHIT OUT OF ME. I GUESS HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER
HERE DADDY WILL RESEARCH ABOUT FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
CLICK
THIS IS THE FIRST BIRTHDAY WE ARE CELEBRATING AT STAR ANNA. MY OTHER SELF FIONA, IS TURNING THIRTEEN
FIONA, COME HERE. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
BLOW OUT THE CANDLES!
IT'S A BIRTHDAY PRESENT, FIONA. A NEW DOLL!
NO! I LIKE EMBER THE BEST!
EMBER IS MY SISTER THAT MOMMY BOUGHT ME!
HA HA! OF COURSE! DADDY IS SORRY


TODAY ... FIONA DIED... SNIFF!
FIONA...
SOMETHING UNBELIEVABLE IS HAPPENING... THE DOLL... AND THE STAR SEEM TO BE EMITTING SOME SORT OF STRANGE FORCE...
THAT MONSTER IS PRETENDING TO BE FIONA AS IF IT S THE OTHER SELF OF HER... AH! FIONA MY FIONA...
HA HA! IT'S STARTING TO EAT... HA HA! BUT I CAN'T DESTROY IT... THIS PLACE IS JUST TOO LONELY...
AM I GOING CRAZY FROM BEING LONELY...?

NO!! THE MONSTER S KILLING PEOPLE... ALL THOSE PEOPLE ON THE SUPPLY SHIP ARE DEAD...
I MUST KILL IT.
BEFORE MORE PEOPLE DIE I MUST KILL IT...
DADDY
...BEFORE OTHER PEOPLE ARE SACRIFICED...
I ONLY NEED ONE DADDY...

I DON'T NEED ANYONE ELSE. LET'S LIVE HAPPILY LIKE WE DID BEFORE... DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE ANYMORE...
I... I WAS SO LONELY... DADDY KNOWS, RIGHT? WHAT LONELINESS IS
I BECAME A HUMAN BECAUSE YOU WERE SO LONELY!
I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE ANYMORE. IT'S TOO SCARY...
THESE CLOTHES FIT YOU WELL...

WHY DO YOU HATE ME...?
drop
I was just
so lonely
IT'S OK DADDY WILL COME BACK
It's just because of that I've been doing all this
A PRIVATELY-OWNED STAR?

OWNED BY A PERSON NAMED CHRISTOPHER JENKINSON. BUT THE RADIO DOESN'T REACH THERE ANYMORE.
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT AFTER WE LAND. HOW MUCH FUEL DO WE HAVE LEFT?
WE HAVE ENOUGH TO LAND ON STAR ANNA. WE HAVE CONTACTED THE SUPPLY SHIP. IT'LL ARRIVE BY 2200 TOMORROW!
GOOD! YOU KNOW, THE RED COLOR GIVES OFF A STRANGE FEELING.
REALLY...? IT LOOKS FASCINATING TO ME...

"I was just
so lonely."

Ember fin

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 7 - Kwanglim is Amazing

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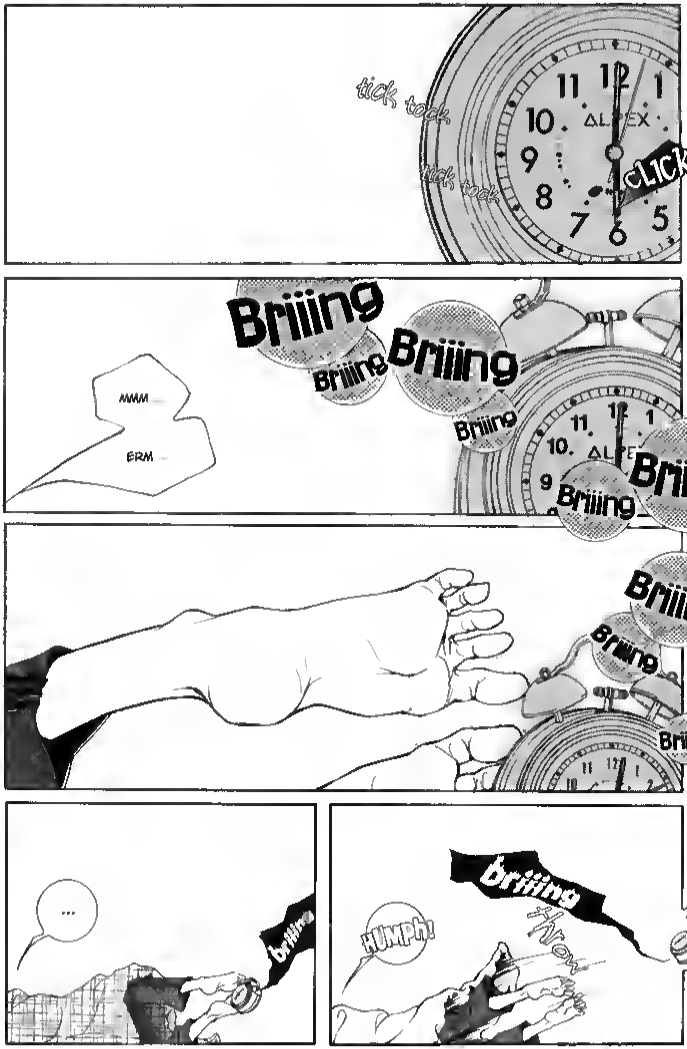
07 Kwanglim is Amazing


tick, tock
tick, tock
CLICK
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
MMM...
ERM...
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
...
briiing
HUMPH!
briiing
THUD

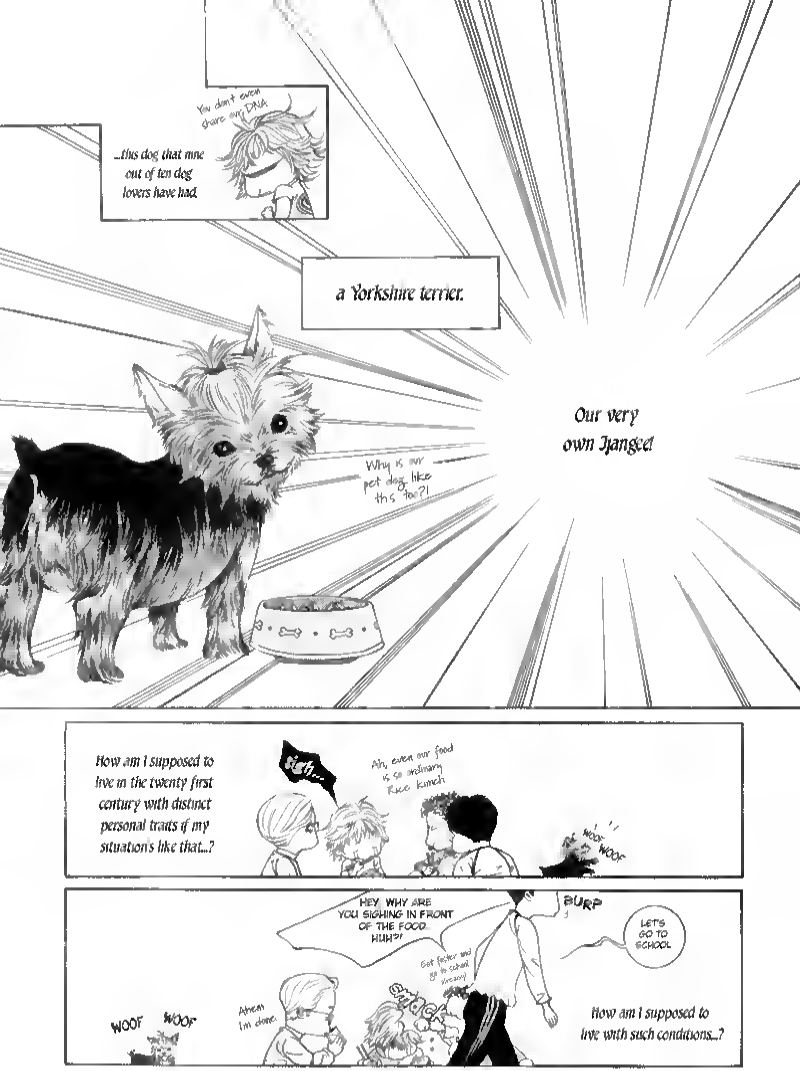
Br
...
ing
...!
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
Briiing
SMASH

yawn
scratch scratch
ERM
errrr
ANOTHER DAY HAS STARTED
When I was young, my dream was...
...to be Miss Korea...

...with long stretched out legs and a face as small as a CD*.
Like in the song lyrics of a popular song that's played everyday
I wanted a pale, white face, big, black eyes, and shiny silky hair as well as a body that moved like a small weak person.
Really now, wouldn't that be a stunning thing...?
YOU'LL BE LATE FOR SCHOOL. COME EAT BREAKFAST ALREADY
OK!
But...
I didn't know back then...
AW... DID YOU SLEEP WELL JJANGEE? COME HERE.
WOOF WOOF
*IN KOREA, A SMALL FACE IS THOUGHT TO BE A PRETTY ONE EVEN BY MODERN STANDARDS

...of the scary powerful thing that I would have to endure.
STOP BEING GIRLY AND COME EAT! WHY ARE YOU HUGGING JJANGGEE THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING?! GO WASH YOUR HANDS!!
the Law of DNA!
IT'S OK. SHE TOOK A BATH YESTERDAY.

Don't you think...
...that my whole family was born to create balance in this world?
Use your allowance sparingly
...
Mom, I need five dollars for school
What for?
I'm straight home after work today and don't drink...
My mom probably couldn't be distinguished from ten other middle aged women.
My younger brother has the same face of at least a hundred people from each Asian country.
And the origin of the commonness in our house.
I told you before, I have to go to the mourning for Manager Kim's mother
my father was born from an ordinary family as an ordinary son, graduated from an ordinary college, and is now working at an ordinary workplace.
And just like a bean from a bean patch, I am like everyone combined.
Well, I can accept that part.
But, surely the thing that I can't take the most is...


You don't even share our DNA
...this dog that nine out of ten dog lovers have had.
a Yorkshire terrier.
Our very own Jangeel
Why is our pet dog like this, too?!
How am I supposed to live in the twenty first century with distinct personal traits of my situation's like that...?
tch...
Ah, even our food is so ordinary. Rice kimchi
WOOF WOOF
HEY, WHY ARE YOU SIGHING IN FRONT OF THE FOOD. HUH?!
BURP
LET'S GO TO SCHOOL
Get faster and go to school, Yeonsu!
Ahem, I'm done.
WOOF WOOF
How am I supposed to live with such conditions...?

Anyway in fifth grade, when my dream of becoming Miss Korea broke down because of my ordinary looks,

I became infatuated with manhwa.

And in middle school, I was into dramas.

I soon understood it all.

For the ugly Candy there was Terius, and for the tough Choi Jin shil, there was Ahn Jae ook. I learned from those women.*

Even if I was bitter or sad about it, I wouldn't cry instead, I would win over any obstacle that came my way

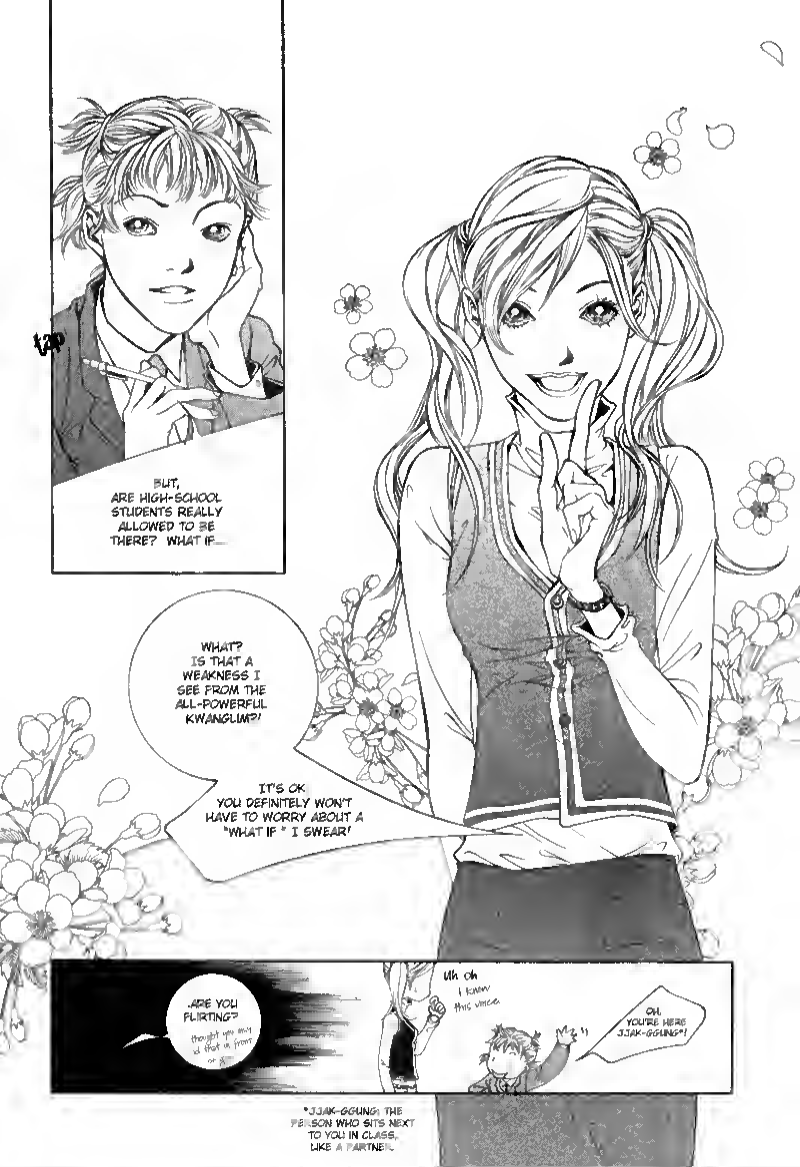
*CANDY CANDY AND TERIUS:
TERIUS IS THE NICKNAME FOR A KOREAN SOCCER PLAYER, AHN JUNG-HWAN, WHICH WAS TAKEN FROM A CHARACTER FROM THE POPULAR JAPANESE CARTOON, CANDY CANDY

**CHOI JIN-SHIL AND AHN JAE-OOK:
AHN JAE WOOK AND CHOI JIN-SHIL APPEARED TOGETHER IN THE 1997 KOREAN DRAMA, A WISH UPON A STAR, ABOUT A TOUGH ORPHAN AND A MUSICIAN FROM A RICH FAMILY

***DOUBLE EYELID:
AN EYELID THAT HAS A DOUBLE LINE, WHICH IS DEEMED TO BE STYLISH

I'll eventually be able to find my own Tetsu!!
BE STRONG, KWANGLIM!!

REALLY?!
REALLY? YOU'RE GOING TO COME WITH ME?
OF COURSE
BELIEVE ME DON'T YOU KNOW ALREADY? I'M A CORPSE WITHOUT THIS STRENGTH.
AW. YOU'RE AN ANGEL KWANGLIM.

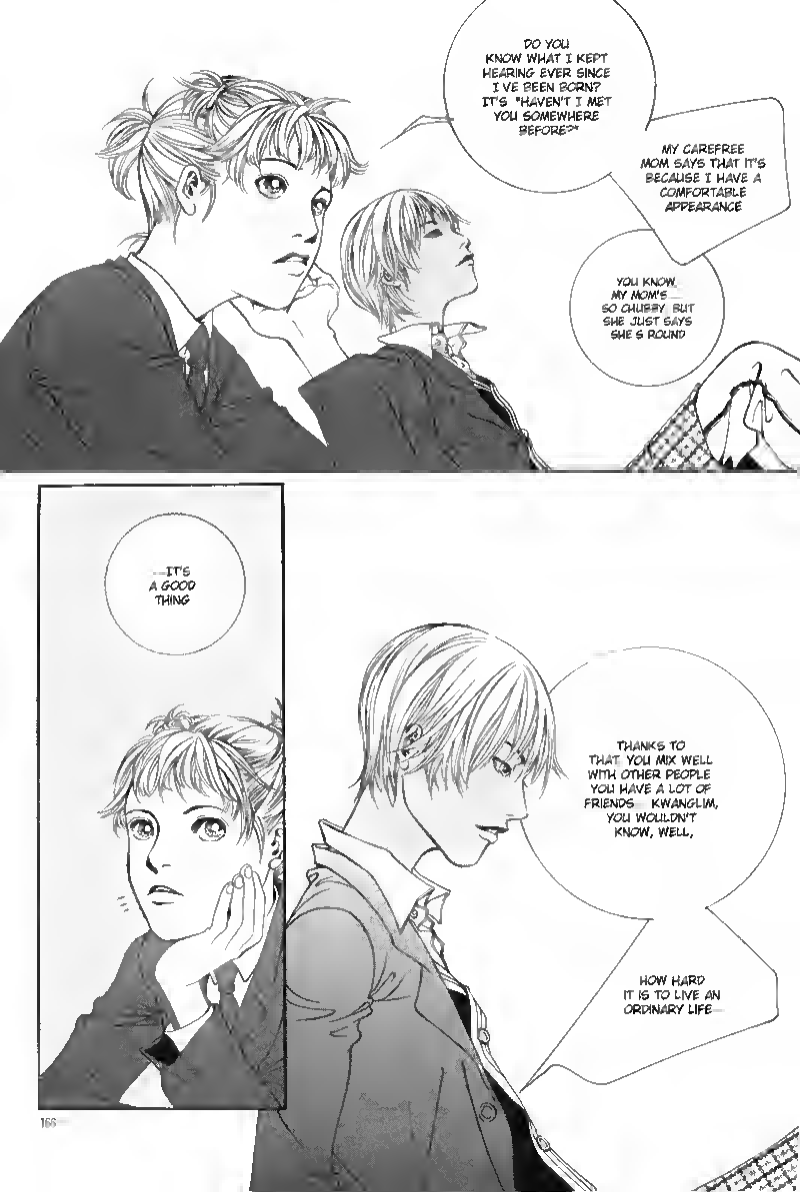

tap
BUT, ARE HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS REALLY ALLOWED TO BE THERE? WHAT IF...
WHAT? IS THAT A WEAKNESS I SEE FROM THE ALL-POWERFUL KWANGLIM?!
IT'S OK. YOU DEFINITELY WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT A "WHAT IF." I SWEAR!
...ARE YOU FLIRTING?
thought you were at that in front of
Uh oh I know this voice.
OH, YOU'RE HERE, JJAK-GGUNG*!
*JJAK-GGUNG: THE PERSON WHO SITS NEXT TO YOU IN CLASS, LIKE A PARTNER.

I GUESS YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK FOR, HUH? WHY ELSE WOULD YOU ACT ALL NICE, LEE YOOYOUNG...?
HEY, IT'S OK MEEJIN THINKS THAT ALL MUSIC IS JUST AN ANNOYING NOISE
kee kee
OH, IT'S NOT THAT THERE'S A PERFORMANCE AT A CLUB WITH REALLY CUTE PEOPLE THAT I WANTED TO SHOW TO KWANGLIM AH! CHO MEEJIN DO YOU WANT TO COME TOO? IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME THAT'S TOO BAD

*NORAEBANG: LITERALLY A MUSIC ROOM. IT'S A PLACE FOR KARAOKE

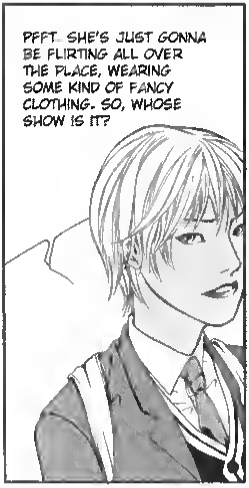
THE FRIENDS THAT SHE WAS INITIALLY GOING TO GO WITH COULDN'T GO — AND THE PEOPLE THERE SEEM TO BOTHER HER SINCE—
WELL. YOOYOUNG'S SO PRETTY, YOU KNOW?
GUYS WOULDN'T LEAVE A GIRL LIKE HER ALONE. I WONDER, WHAT IT WOULD FEEL LIKE TO BE THAT PRETTY?
PTOOEY
IT WOULD BE LIKE BEING A PRINCESS NOT KNOWING THAT YOU'RE DYING OF A SICKNESS. DON'T THEY CALL IT AS SOME SORT OF PRINCESS CANCER?
They don't know what it will truly be from?
ARE YOU JEALOUS?
RIGHT — ME JEALOUS? I'M BETTER THAN SOMEONE WHO ONLY HAS HUGE EYES.*
TUKM
YEAH, YOU'RE A DISTINGUISHABLE INDIVIDUAL, SO YOU WOULDN'T KNOW — ABOUT THE SORROW OF A VERY ORDINARY PERSON LIKE ME —

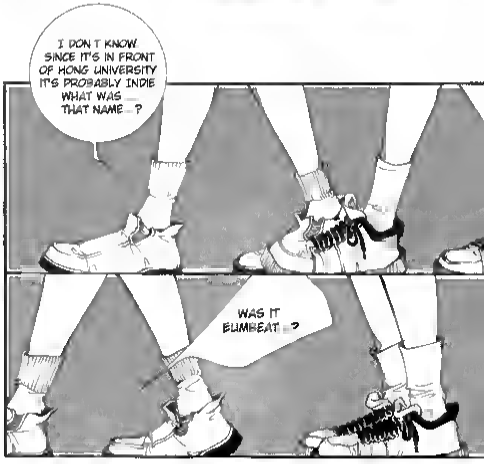
*HUGE EYES CONSIDERED TO BE PRETTY IN KOREA


DO YOU KNOW WHAT I KEPT HEARING EVER SINCE I'VE BEEN BORN? IT'S "HAVEN'T I MET YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE?"
MY CAREFREE MOM SAYS THAT IT'S BECAUSE I HAVE A COMFORTABLE APPEARANCE
YOU KNOW, MY MOM'S SO CHUBBY, BUT SHE JUST SAYS SHE'S ROUND
—IT'S A GOOD THING
THANKS TO THAT, YOU MIX WELL WITH OTHER PEOPLE. YOU HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS— KWANGLIM, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW, WELL,
HOW HARD IT IS TO LIVE AN ORDINARY LIFE—

It's not hard. It's so easy. Shall I tell you how?
stand
JUMP
CHEW CHEW
CHEW CHEW
Kwa Kwangtim
CHEW CHEW
CHEW CHEW
Forgive me
CHEW CHEW
RES-TAU-RANT
Taxi

HAESUNG STATIONERY
SO LEE YOOYOUNG WENT HOME?
YE. IN THE SHOW'S AT EIGHT. WE'RE GONNA MEET EACH OTHER LATER, AFTER WE CHANGE.
Ooo... This isn't to good-looking. I'm gonna love you forever!
REAL TOR
PHAR MACY


PFFT... SHE'S JUST GONNA BE FLIRTING ALL OVER THE PLACE, WEARING SOME KIND OF FANCY CLOTHING. SO, WHOSE SHOW IS IT?


I DON'T KNOW. SINCE IT'S IN FRONT OF HONG UNIVERSITY IT'S PROBABLY INDIE. WHAT WAS THAT NAME...?
WAS IT ELUMBEAT...?

ELUMBEAT...?

YEAH. ISN'T THAT A FUNNY NAME, THOUGH?
WHY...?
WHAT..?! IT'S NOTHING. LET'S GO.
DO YOU WANT TO COME OVER TO MY HOUSE IF YOU DON'T HAVE PLANS LATER ON? MY MOM MADE THAT DWAENJANG-CHEEGAE* THAT YOU LIKE AGAIN
I'm sick of it though.
YOUR MOM'S DWAENJANG-CHEEGAE IS REALLY GOOD TOO BAD, THOUGH. I HAVE SOMETHING TO DO. I'LL TAKE A RAIN CHECK, OK?
You wouldnt know ... how hard it is to live an ordinary life...

*DWAENJANG-CHEEGAE. A SOUP MADE WITH FERMENTED BEAN PASTE WITH VEGETABLES

Strange.
TATTOO
TATTOO
he puts on those dark expressions at times.
WHERE IS THIS GIRL...?
Kwangjin is amazing!

ruff ruff
SHE SHOULD CALL ME AT LEAST
81

AH!
HUFF HUFF
TATTOO
SHREEEE
...
BR...
...
HE MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY RUSHY...
...
WHAT AN IDIOT.
hee hee
slip

huff
huff
He has a scary face...
It... It can't be that he...?!
Oh, no!
He must have heard
me call him an idiot...!
I'M.
I'M SORRY...

Th..Da
Sob
I DIDN'T MEAN IT.
YOU HAVE THE SAME SHIRT!!
Huh..?!
HOW MUCH DID YOU GET IT FOR? I PAID FIFTEEN DOLLARS TO A VENDOR IN FRONT OF EE UNIVERSITY. DID YOU, BY ANY CHANCE, GET IT FOR CHEAPER?
DID DID YOU, UM HOW MUCH?

HEY, NICK, YOU SHOULD COME IN QUICKLY IF YOU'RE ALREADY HERE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE?!
COME ON IN
LET ME BORROW THIS IT MATCHES WELL WITH THE SHIRT. I'LL GIVE IT BACK
reach
YOU'RE GONNA WATCH OUR SHOW RIGHT?
flop
flop

What the...
Did he, by any chance...
IDIOT
...fall in love with me..?

KWANGLIM! I'M SO SORRY...!
I... wonder...

WOW.. REALLY? THERE SURE ARE SOME WEIRD PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD
IT WAS MORE FUNNY THAN WEIRD
scratch
HE'S GOT SOME WEIRD TASTES
WELL THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD LET'S GO IN I'LL COVER FOR YOU ALL THE WAY
Wha... what..?
YEA ... YEAH.

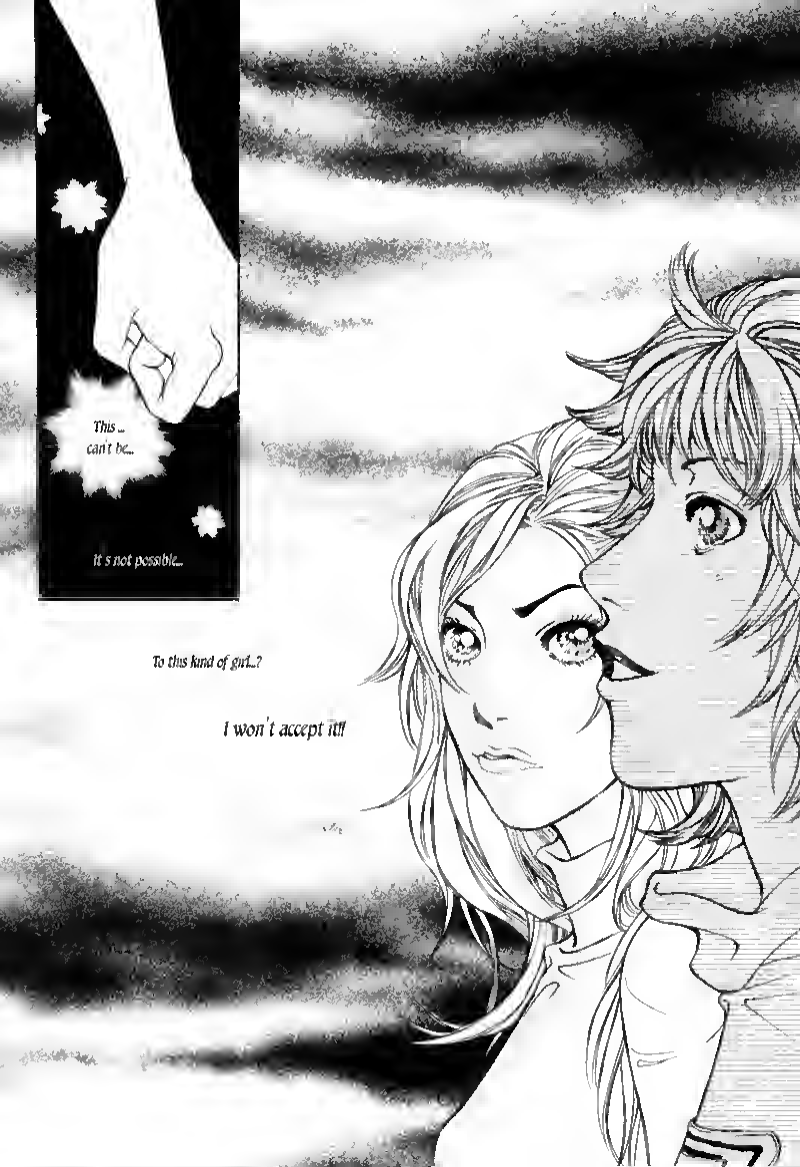
OH,NO
BUMPBEAT HAS
ALREADY STARTED
PERFORMING...
That's not nice...
She must have
been joking...
AIIEEE
AIIEEE
AIIEEE

KWANGJIM, KWANGJIM! IT'S THEM. AREN'T THEY SO COOL?!
TOILET
Wow... I never knew this sort of place existed.
WHO'S THE MOST GOOD-LOOKING? HOW ABOUT HIM? I PICKED HIM OUT LAST TIME I CAME HE'S REALLY CUTE
WHO?
THE ONE RAPPING AND WEARING THE HAT THEY'RE GOING TO DEBUT SOON.
REALLY? BUT WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I CAN'T TELL JUST BY A HAT...
HIM?
OR ... HIM?

NO, THE ONE WITH THE WOOL HAT AND THE KHAKI
WHERE? WHO?
THE SAME SHIRT AS YOU!
IT CAN'T BE... IT'S... HIM? NO, RIGHT?!
WHY... WHY IS HE UP THERE...?

HEY, YOU WITH THE SAME SHIRT!
STAY AND GET YOUR HAT BACK.

Hat
♪ hat
mm chuwee
mm chuwee
chuwee mm
chuwee..
♪ hat hat mm chuwee
THAT IDIOT...
Hee hee..
I feel happy..


This ...
can't be...
it's not possible...
To this kind of girl...?
I won't accept it!!

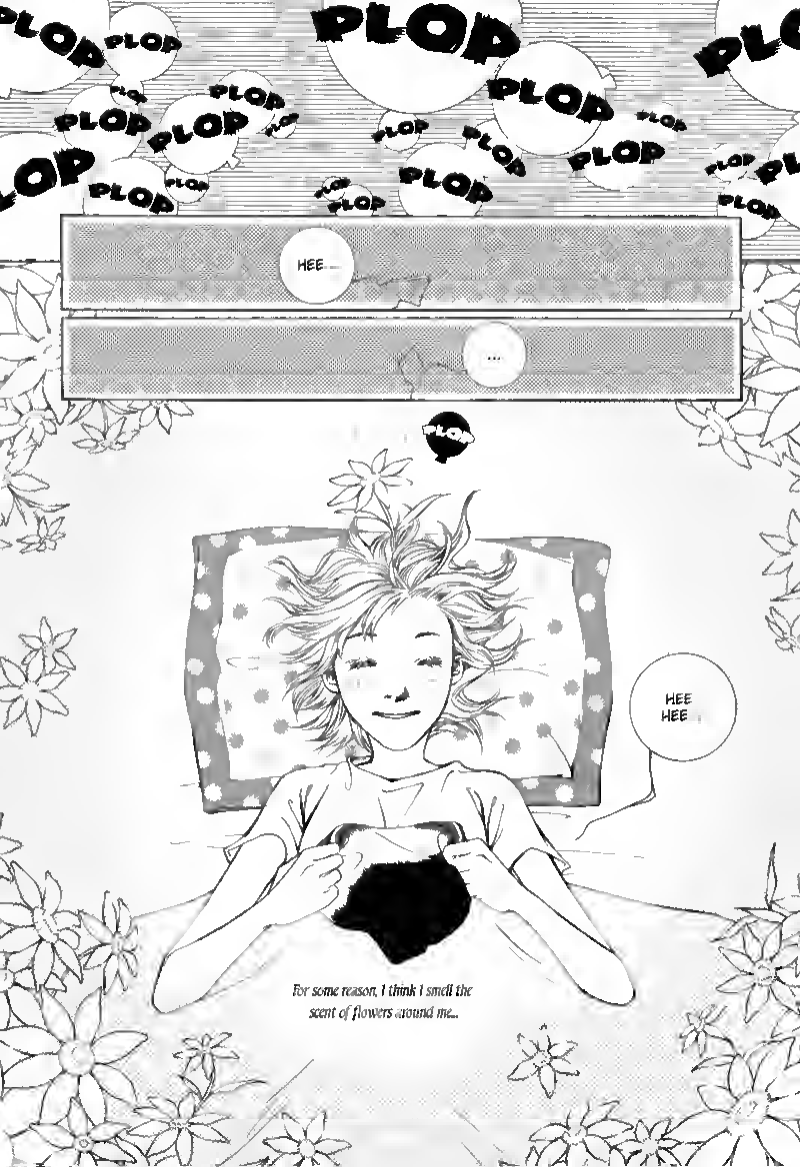
YEAH, REALLY...
ALL THE PEOPLE WATCHING THE SHOW WERE SHOCKED. IS HE BLIND?
I'M REALLY DISAPPOINTED.. I TOLD YOU!
SHE'S SO ORDINARY, AND HE'S A GUY SURE ENOUGH.

IF IT WAS SOME OTHER GIRL, I WOULDN'T FEEL THIS DISTRESSED.
ARE YOU CRAZY?! I BROUGHT HER OUT OF THERE IMMEDIATELY BY SAYING I WAS SICK.
—YOU KNOW WHO IT'S THE GUY I PICKED OUT THE OTHER TIME— YEAH, HIM—
WHAT?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY A STRANGE RUMOR?

WHAT IS IT? TELL ME QUICKLY
"Thanks."

WHEN YOU COME NEXT TIME, I'LL TREAT YOU TO SOMETHING, SINCE YOUR FRIEND'S SICK TODAY
I HAVE TO PAY YOU BACK FOR BORROWING YOUR HAT
"We have a show every Friday and Saturday."
"You should go on Saturday since our show starts at four that day."

Oh...
Tomorrow s...
Saturday."
MUSIC Life
"You know what I'm saying, right...?"
"I'll be waiting..."
...
—!
plop
plop
—
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
....
PLOP
PLOP


PLOP
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PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP
HEE...
...
PLOP
HEE HEE
For some reason, I think I smell the scent of flowers around me...

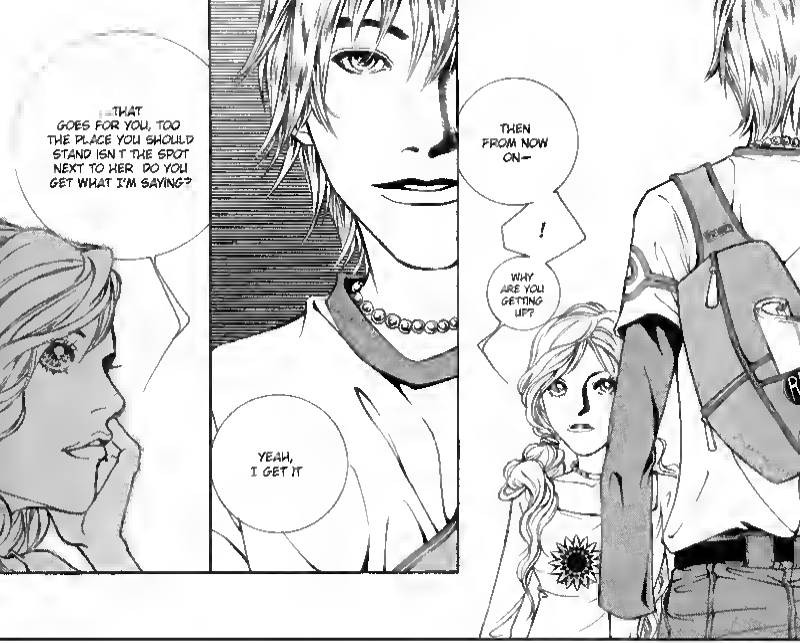
Meejin!
Thank you!!
THANK YOU?
FOR WHAT?
What's wrong? You're making me nervous.
THANK YOU
THANK YOU SO
SO MUCH
Thank
you
...
What's that
sarcastic-
looking
glance?

YOU KNOW THE SHIRT THAT I BOUGHT BECAUSE YOU SUGGESTED IT, THE ONE I BOUGHT AT DONGDAEMUN*?! I WORE THAT YESTERDAY AND MET THIS AWESOME GUY!!
IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU!
*DONGDAEMUN: MORE PROPERLY KNOWN AS HEUNGINJIMUN, IT MEANS "GREAT EAST GATE" AND THE AREA AROUND IT HAS SOME LARGE-SCALE SHOPPING DISTRICTS
"AWESOME" GUY—?
Yes!
FOR REAL? OR DID YOU JUST HYPE HIM UP?
Wilt
Your standards are so low.
What's wrong with my standards?
FOR REAL!
THAT'S GOOD YOUR LIFE'S FINALLY ABOUT TO TURN FOR THE BETTER, KWANGJIM PAK
THAT GUY SURE KNOWS HOW TO JUDGE PEOPLE
ANYWAY-
HE DEFINITELY HAS WEIRD TASTE!
plo
ploo
Hehl The evenicle
B-BE NICE!
DON'T LET HER GO!
ploop

SO WHAT KIND OF GUY IS HE? TELL ME WHAT YOU SAW AND HOW YOU FELT ABOUT IT.
I DON'T REALLY KNOW. I DIDN'T GET TO TALK TO HIM MUCH. BUT I FELT SOMETHING—
...from that guy...
POP POP POP
Coca

pfft. Look at those tips
HUH? WHO'S THIS?!
TOILE
TOO
AH, YOU'RE THE PRETTY FRIEND OF THE GIRL WITH THE SAME SHIRT. SO, WHERE IS SHE?

I DON'T KNOW SHE'S PROBABLY STROLLING ABOUT ON THE STREETS, EATING FAST FOOD
YOU DIDN'T COME TOGETHER AFTER SCHOOL? DID SHE TELL YOU WHEN SHE WAS COMING?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW! THAT KIND OF GIRL IS...!
YOU SEE. I'M NOT CLOSE WITH HER DO I LOOK LIKE I'M A CLOSE FRIEND OF HERS? I JUST HUNG AROUND HER FOR A WHILE BECAUSE SHE WANTED ME TO
YOU THINK EVERYONE'S ON THE SAME LEVEL, HUH? I'M SORRY TO SAY THIS, BUT THEY'RE NOT. SHE AND I STOOD ON DIFFERENT GROUNDS EVER SINCE BIRTH AND


...THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO THE PLACE YOU SHOULD STAND ISN'T THE SPOT NEXT TO HER. DO YOU GET WHAT I'M SAYING?
YEAH, I GET IT
THEN FROM NOW ON—
!
WHY ARE YOU GETTING UP?

I SAID I GOT IT. SHOULD I GO INTO DETAILS? YOU'RE NOT A CLOSE FRIEND OF HERS, RIGHT? BECAUSE YOU TWO ARE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS SINCE BIRTH, RIGHT?! SLUT.
THAT'S THE MOST FORTUNATE PART. IF SHE WAS CLOSE TO SOMEONE AS BITCHY AS YOU, I WASN'T GOING TO MEET UP WITH HER. GOT IT? GOOD-BYE THEN.

I KNOW ABOUT IT... THE RUMOR THAT'S GOING AROUND ABOUT YOU...
YOU'VE BEEN LIVING OVERSEAS SO IT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A BIG DEAL TO YOU BUT KWANGLIM'S A CONSERVATIVE KOREAN SHE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND BUT I'M DIFFERENT
IF YOU ACT COLD TOWARD HER, SHE'LL UNDERSTAND SINCE SHE'S SO EXCITED RIGHT NOW. SO RIGHT NOW WHY DON'T WE—
TAP TAP

DO ME A FAVOR AND NEVER MEET UP WITH ME AGAIN
...
I'M SORRY BUT WE'RE GOING TO MEET UP AGAIN
beep
You dare do that to me...?
HEY, BITCH.
That was a new experience for me.
But he overdid it...
IT'S ME DID YOU FIND OUT?
YEAH OK

HM... YEAH... OK I'LL SEE YOU LATER
WHAT?
YOOYOUNG--SHE'S AT TATTOO RIGHT NOW AND WANTS ME TO COME SINCE SHE GOT SICK LAST TIME SHE WANTS TO TREAT ME TO FOOD SINCE WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH FUN YESTERDAY
TATTOO? WHY IS SHE THERE? DOESN'T SHE KNOW THAT YOU'RE MEETING UP WITH HIM TODAY?
OF COURSE SHE KNOWS ABOUT IT SHE WAS THERE WHEN HE AND I MADE THAT PROMISE TO MEET UP LATER
How do you really get pretty if you do this?*
WHAT COULD SHE BE PLANNING...?

*A FACE MASK WITH RAW CUCUMBERS.

KWANGLIM... HOW CAN YOU BE SO NICE TO YOOYOUNG? YOU KNOW EVERY-ONE HATES HER
MUNCH
I FEEL BAD FOR HER BECAUSE OF THAT.
SHE EATS ALONE AND GOES TO SCHOOL ALONE... DIDN'T YOU THINK SHE WOULD GET REALLY LONELY FROM ALL THAT?

HER BLUNT WAY OF SPEAKING AND HER LOOK OF CONTEMPT ARE PROB-ABLY WAYS OF GETTING RID OF THAT LONELINESS
She just has princess disease
YEAH RIGHT! YOU'RE JUST BEING A BUSYBODY
I can't tell you anything
MEEJIN... I FEEL WEIRD... ABOUT MYSELF...

I FEEL LIKE ... I'VE BECOME A REALLY SPECIAL PERSON...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I THOUGHT YESTERDAY AFTER I CAME HOME AND LOOKED AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR...?
IT'S THE FIRST TIME THAT I'VE EVER FELT THIS WAY...
MY FACE IN THE MIRROR LOOKED SO PRETTY...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE...?

YEAH I THINK I KNOW — BUT —
SAY THAT AFTER YOU TAKE THOSE CUCUMBERS OFF
hee hee
You look so funny
I SHOULD STOP BEING FRIENDS WITH YOU

"...I think I know."

When you said that

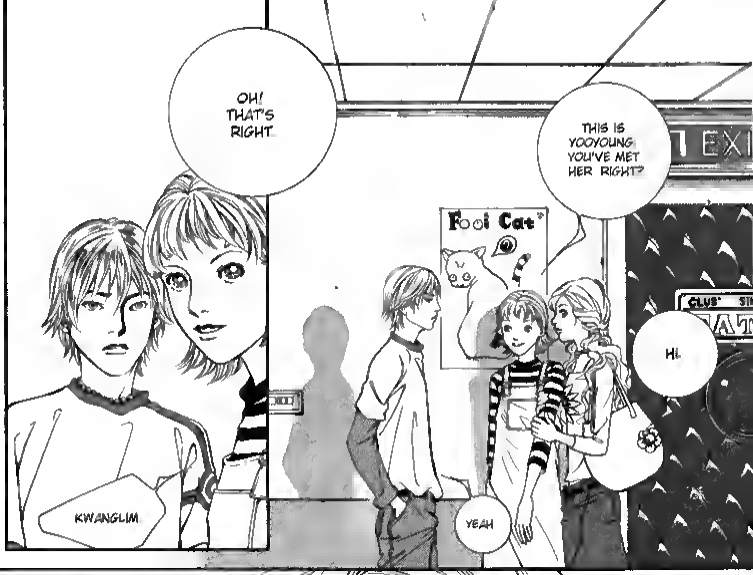
something reached out
and touched my heart,

and...

Somehow I feel happy too...

He probably...
...knows that too...
TATTOO
HEY, NICK!
HEL — LO
Wife ?
Wave your hand!
YOUR WIFE'S HERE!
Oh! You're the girl with the same shirt!
Me knowing that.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THEY'RE NORMALLY LIKE THAT
Eum chwee Eum chwee ♪ chwee
same shirt
eum chwee
same shirt and hat
eum chwee
I TOLD HIM NO, BUT HE STILL BROUGHT ME TO THE WAITING ROOM...
IT'S OK. I WAS GOING TO GET YOU, ANYWAY
PLO
PLOOP
WHAT THE...
UM... YOUR HAIR...
I didn't know... that a guy's hand can be that soft...
OH... THE GUYS SAID I COULDN'T KEEP MY OLD HAIRSTYLE...
IT'S WEIRD RIGHT?


OH! THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS IS YOOYOUNG. YOU'VE MET HER RIGHT?
Fooi Cat
HI.
KWANGLIM.
YEAH.

I CAME OUT TO SEE IF YOU'RE BEING GOOD TO KWANGLIM. YOU'RE HER FIRST BOYFRIEND, SO IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT IF YOU'RE A BAD ONE.
HEY, THAT'S MEAN.
KWANGLIM. YOU'RE SO NAIVE, SO YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF BAD GUYS THESE DAYS.
FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO LIVE WITH WOMEN OUR AGE RIGHT, NICK?!

IS THAT ALL? THAT'S ALL OF THE RUMORS YOU COLLECTED ABOUT ME?
I'M DISAPPOINTED THERE ARE MORE RUMORS SAYING THAT I'M SOME TRANSSEXUAL OR A GIRL DISGUISED AS A GUY
KWANGJIM, IT'S NOT JUST A RUMOR. MY FRIEND FOLLOWED HIM TO HIS HOUSE AND CONFIRMED IT. HE WENT INTO A HOUSE AT NIGHT WITH A WOMAN WITH LONG, CURLY HAIR AND DIDN'T COME OUT 'TIL MORNING! JUST WAIT HERE. I'LL SHOW YOU
SHE COMES EVERY SATURDA-
YOU MEAN ME?

LONG CURLY HAIR, THE GIRL THAT LIVES WITH NICK YOU MEAN ME?!
!
Hi ♡ n cky
SHOCK
I'm not in the mood to joke around
)))
SEE? WHAT DID I JUST SAY? LET'S LEAVE THEM HERE AND GO ELSEWHERE, KWANGLIM.

WILL YOU GO ON AHEAD?
HEY! HOW CAN YOU BE ATTACHED TO A GUY THAT MUCH? I EVEN CONFIRMED THE RUMOR FOR YOU. JUST COME WITH ME!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIEND 'TIL NOW. EVEN IF YOU HAD SAID HURTFUL THINGS, I JUST THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT YOU DIDN'T MEAN IT.
BUT... I THINK I MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRONG ABOUT YOU. I WOULDN'T HAVE GONE AND CONFIRMED SOME RUMORS LIKE YOU DID AND CREATE THIS KIND OF SITUATION.
I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS, BUT YOU HURT MY FEELINGS... YOU SHOULD LEAVE - PLEASE
...!
WHATEVER!

I DON'T CARE IF YOU BELIEVE ME OR NOT, BUT I LIKED YOOYOUNG... LOSING A FRIEND MAKES ONE FEEL REALLY DIRTY...
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE TWO FRIENDS IN ONE DAY...
SO TELL ME THE TRUTH. WHAT'S THE DEAL BEHIND THIS SITUATION?

...CHO MEEJIN.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU LIVE WITH THAT GUY NAMED NICK SO. NO MATTER WHAT RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH HIM, TELL ME WHY YOU TRICKED AND PLAYED ME LIKE THIS
I DON'T CARE IF YOU LIE... JUST TELL ME AT LEAST. I'LL LISTEN TO ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY...
WAS IT ONLY ME WHO THOUGHT OF US AS FRIENDS...?

SLIP
AFTER I LEFT YOUR HOUSE THE OTHER DAY, NICK CALLED ME WHEN I WAS ON MY WAY HOME HE WAS SO MAD BECAUSE OF YOOYOUNG.
ON SATURDAYS, NICK AND I NORMALLY TAKE TURNS RAPPING, BUT I WASN'T GOING TO COME TODAY BECAUSE YOU WERE MEETING UP WITH HIM. BUT ... BECAUSE OF OF YOOYOUNG, I HAD TO COME BECAUSE I THOUGHT THIS KIND OF MISUNDERSTANDING WOULD HAPPEN.
The misunderstanding got bigger than I expected there.
NICK WANTED TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING FROM THE BEGINNING BUT I DIDN'T LET HIM ...
I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO HIM ... KWANGLIM I WOULD NEVER LIE TO YOU!
NICK AND I... NO, MISUK AND I...

WE'RE TWINS WHO LIVED SEPARATELY WITH DIVORCED PARENTS.
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T TELL YOU BEFORE...
I WAS IN THIRD GRADE WHEN MY PARENTS DIVORCED.

MISUK WENT WITH MOM TO CANADA AND I WENT WITH DAD TO PUSAN ULSAN IT WAS JUST LIKE THAT EVEN THOUGH OUR PARENTS DIDN T HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP
WE WERE REALLY CLOSE SO WE WROTE LETTERS AND EMAILED EACH OTHER
...OH...
AND AFTER I FIRST MET YOU IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, OUR LETTERS WERE MOSTLY ABOUT YOU
ABOUT ME?! WHY? DID YOU SAY BAD THINGS ABOUT ME?
NO... I WAS JEALOUS OF YOU...
YOU KEPT COMPLAINING THAT YOUR FAMILY WAS TOO ORDINARY BUT MISUK AND I WERE JEALOUS OF EVERYTHING YOU HAD YOUR PARENTS YOUR BROTHER YOUR HOUSE S ATMOSPHERE
WE REALLY WANTED TO LIVE LIKE THAT

ANYWAY WE LIVED LIKE THAT UNTIL LAST WINTER WHEN MOM GOT REMARRIED AND MISUK CAME TO KOREA WITH A FRIEND TO MAKE MUSIC
WE'VE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR THREE MONTHS NOW
OH! WANT ME TO TELL YOU A FUN STORY? A FEW DAYS AFTER MISUK MOVED IN
I WAS GOING INTO MISUK'S ROOM TO GET HIS LAUNDRY WHEN I SAW THAT HE HAD YOUR PICTURE THAT I HAD SENT TO HIM IN MIDDLE SCHOOL REMEMBER THAT PHYSICAL WE HAD WHEN THERE WAS A GIRL WHO LIMPED AROUND?
WHAT ? HE STILL HAS THIS PHOTO.
REMEMBER HOW SHE KEPT FALLING DOWN WHEN WE HAD TO RUN AROUND SO YOU PIGGYBACKED HER THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE HALF MILE OF THE RUN? I SENT HIM THE PHOTO WE TOOK THAT DAY
PFFT YOU DID THAT?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE WROTE ON TOP OF THE PHOTO? IN BIG RED LETTERS

YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING? MISUK ... CAME TO KOREA BECAUSE OF YOU...

'When you said that,

something reached out
and touched my heart,

and...

Somehow I feel happy too..."

Kwanglim is Amazing fin

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 8 - Music Box

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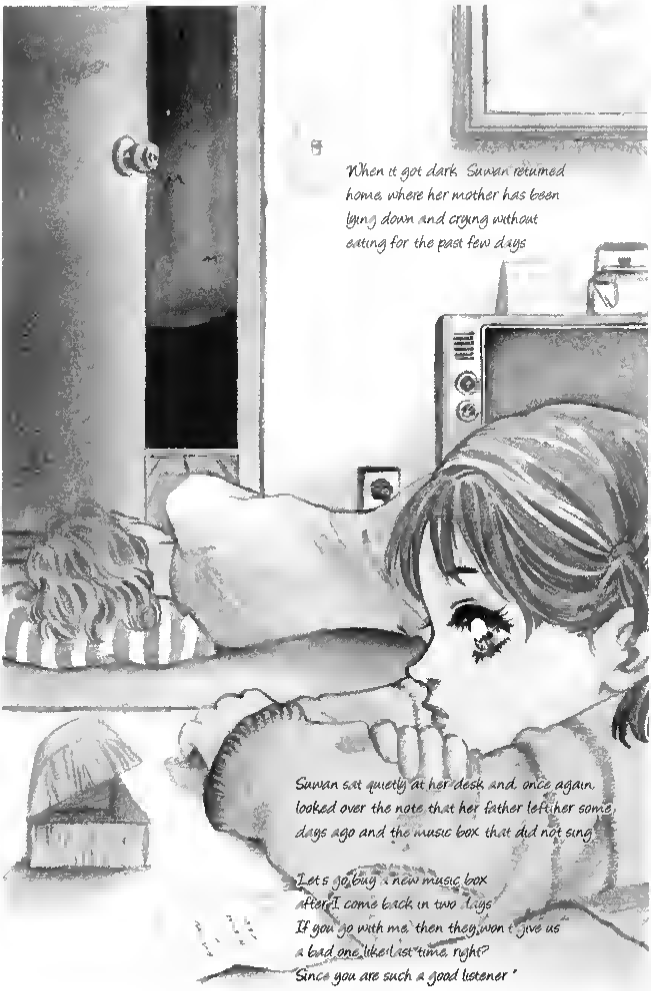
08 Music Box

Sawan is a small girl who lives
in a small fishing town near
the beautiful blue sea.

For many days now
she has come to the pier after school
and sits through the cold sea wind

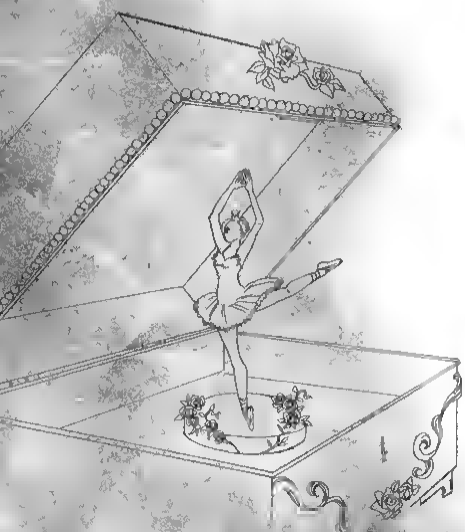
waiting for her father
who said that he would only
be away for two days


When it got dark, Suwan returned home where her mother has been lying down and crying without eating for the past few days
Suwan sat quietly at her desk and once again looked over the note that her father left her some days ago and the music box that did not sing
Let's go buy a new music box after I come back in two days
If you go with me then they won't give us a bad one like last time, right?
Since you are such a good listener

It happened about a month ago.
That day was Hyegyung's birthday,
so Suwan and a few other village children were invited.
There was a pretty cake, delicious food,

and a music box that Hyegyung's uncle had
bought in Seoul as a birthday present. Filling the
air with excitement when the lid was opened,
a beautiful melody would flow out and a
pretty ballerina would twirl around.

This music box.



made Suwan want to have one of her own.
So that night, after she came back home,
she bugged her father about it.
But no matter how much she tried to talk to him,
he was left with a confused face. Suwan was flustered.
She had never felt so impatient with her father who could
neither hear nor talk. In the end, with her small hand
clamping a pencil, she wrote about the music box.

"When the box opens, pretty music comes out."

At last, her father smiled and nodded his head.
He nodded his head for a long time.

And a few days later
her father came back from visiting a
market in town with a music box in his hands
Suwa was so happy that she kissed
her father two times on his cheek
which had a prickly beard
Her father was as happy as she was

But...

No matter how many times she opened
the music box, the music wouldn't come out
Suwan was confused and opened the box over and over again
but the music would still not come out
Her father was smiling at Suwan with her music box
until her mother said, "What's wrong?"

Father was still smiling

"It's broken. Father mistakenly bought a broken one."

Her mother then said,
"Those evil people. I can't believe they would
sell this to him just because he couldn't hear."

And then, her father did not smile any more.
He realized that something was wrong
by looking at the faces of his wife and Suwan

The next day, her father left again, and so the day he hadn't come back from hiding. After ten days had passed since her father had left, her mother went with the villagers to meet the lords' army in town. They didn't return even when it was late at night and everything was as black as ink outside the door. Heavy pounding on the windows.
Shoun was very scared.

"Mama!"

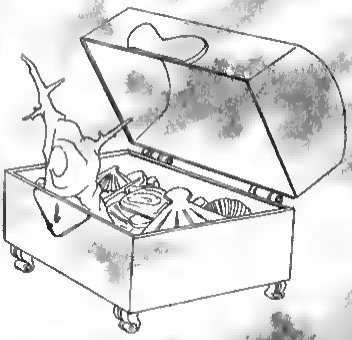
She suddenly thought of her father as tears poured out of her eyes.
She cried again and again until she fell asleep tired.
The night seeped in deeper and deeper until a warm hand touched her.

Unaware of the wind calming down and the stars shining brightly through the dark night outside the windows, Suwan felt herself being embraced in a warm hug from someone smelling sweetly of seaweed. It was a smell that she was so familiar with. Suwan, lifting her head, said
"Father?"
But strangely, her father heard her voice and answered her
"Yes, it's Father."
He had always been cold even when that she had always longed for him to hold
"Father, why are you so late? I waited so long for you."
"I know. I'm sorry. Father is sorry. So I brought you a present."
Her father took the leather pouch on the top of the desk and opened the lid.
Then, music strangely flowed out from the box that had been broken until now. The music was a beautiful sound that did not exist anywhere else in this world.

The sound of clear sunlight blue sea and the lullaby of a warm father came together to form ... the sound of love.

Sawan fell into a warm sleep until she could only dimly smell the disappearing fragrance of vague seaweeds.

while that sound continued to flow out of the music box.



Father,

why are you so late...?

I waited so long for you..."

Music Box fin

en·tro·py

1

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 9 - Uh Heul Lee

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09 Uh Heul Lee

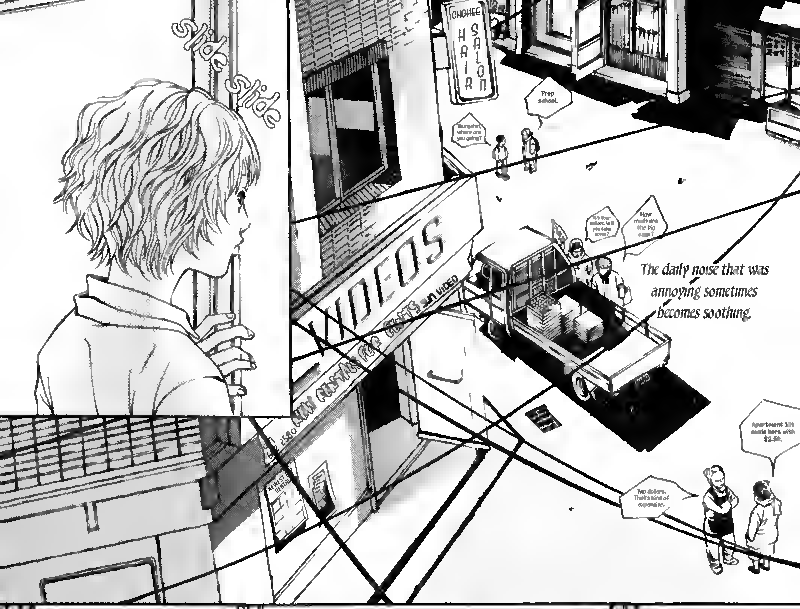
May I yearn once more...

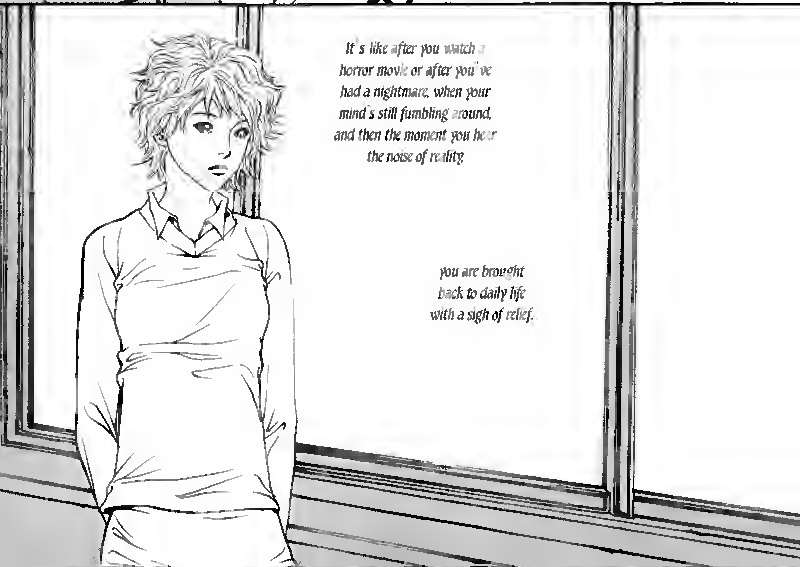
...for the beautiful scenery that borders the road that I've traveled in my childhood...

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

BOOM
HHH...!
EGGS! EGGS!
FRESH AND YUMMY. I'VE GOT EGGS
HERE
FRESH BIG EGGS
FOR ONLY THREE DOLLARS!

NUTRITIOUS, HEALTHY EGGS FOR ONLY
FOUR DOLLARS
KIM YOUNG-CHUL, WHAT'S TODAY'S HOMEWORK? HEY...
KIM YOUNG-CHUL
BOILED EGGS
I HAVE TO MAKE KIMCHI*, BUT THE PRICE FOR CABBAGE IS TOO HIGH.
APARTMENT 103 GOT CABBAGE AT A LOWER PRICE FROM SOME-PLACE
FOR HOW MUCH?
LAUNDRY! GIVE ME YOUR LAUNDRY!*
*In Korea, most people live in apartments, where it's common for the cleaners to walk down the stairs calling for any laundry that needs to be washed.
*A traditional Korean dish that's largely based on Chinese cabbage.
SIGH
FLARE
...Sometimes...
click click click


Stick Slide
CHOCHEE HAIR SALON
Prep school.
Where's your uniform?
VIDEOS
Hey! Watch where you're going!
Sorry!
The daily noise that was annoying sometimes becomes soothing.
Two dollars. That's kind of expensive...
Apartment 301 inside liars, with $12.5m.


It's like after you watch a horror movie or after you've had a nightmare, when your mind's still fumbling around, and then the moment you hear the noise of reality
you are brought back to daily life with a sigh of relief.

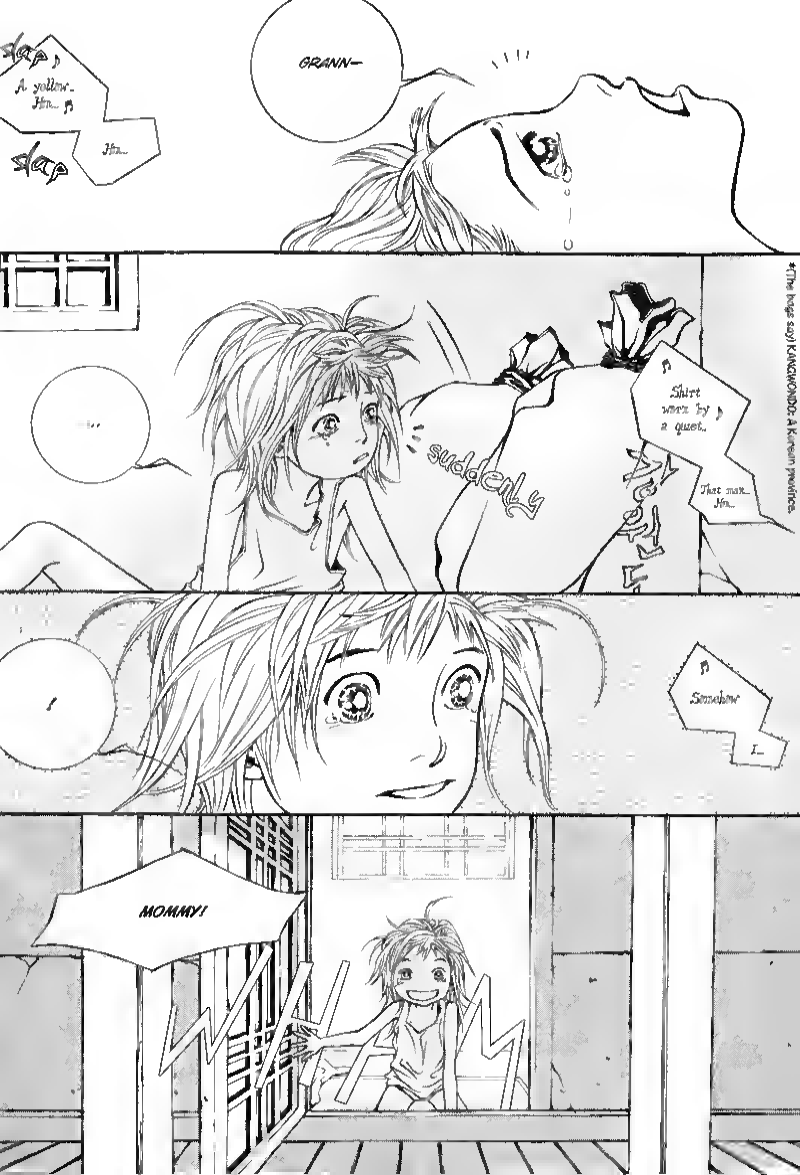
But that example can only be applied to the horror of made up things. No noise from daily life could rescue me from the horror of reality.
Actually the noise would only make me more scared and depressed.
R R R R
That was how it was like when my parents passed away...
HELLO OH, JIN WHAT ABOUT YOUNGGUK?
YEAH I'LL BE THERE YEAH
WHAT?
...and when I had a miscarriage...
YOU'VE FOUND ..?
It was like that when I got divorced, too..
WHERE ..?

LIH HEUL LEE...
huff
huff
Save me...
Save me...

*Story about two sisters who drowned in a lake.

EE
EEK
I'm never...
GRANNY!
GRANNY!
going to watch Home of the Legends again!

*Popular TV show in the 90s that aired scary stories and legends.


GRANN—
A yellow- Hm...
Hm...
...
suddenly
Shirt were by a quiet..
That man.. Hm..
I
Somehow I..
MOMMY!

*Unni: How a girl addresses an older girl or sister who she's familiar with.

DID YA CRY? YOU LOOK LAK YOU HAD A BAD DREAM, HUH? IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW. ARE YA HUNGRY?
Sook-unnn.
The one who lived with us because of my family's selfishness...
and the one who left because of my family's selfishness...
was this person...

DID YOUNG JU WAKE UP?
GRANNY!
YA RE BACK, MA'AM?
THAT'S HER? SHE LOOKS YOUNG
SOOK, GO FETCH A BOWL OF COOL WATER FROM THE KITCH
YA *
SHE'S EIGHTEEN, AND AH WOULDN'T HAVE SENT HER AWAY EVEN IF AH HATED HER. SHE'S A GIRL THAT WORKED AT A PLACE MY DAUGHTER KNEW.
THE FAMILY SHE WORKED FOR SUDDENLY LEFT TOWN. SO SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO AND MY DAUGHTER KEPT SAYING SHE WAS SORRY FOR MAKIN' ME TAKE CARE OF HER FIRST CHILD. SO... AH JUST TOLD HER TO BRING HER 'ERE
...A few days before that, Mom had come by.

*Ya means "you" in this case. Some people here speak with an accent, hence the odd spellings you see.

THAT'S GOOD IF HYUNGNIM* TAKES CARE OF HER AND WEDS HER OFF... THEN THAT'S HYUNGNIM'S GOOD FORTUNE
OF COURSE AH'LL BE TAKING CARE OF HER, THINKING IT'S THE WILL OF BUDDHA AND LIKE YA SAID IT'LL BE GOOD FOR ME AND FOR HER IF AH MARRY HER OFF
I was so happy because I hadn't seen her in months.
But Mom, who had always worn a firm look on her face, hugged and cried with Grand mother all night and then went up to Seoul the next day.
...Mom always had a cold expression.
♪ Wearing a yellow shirt... ♪
*Hyungnim: way to refer to someone older than you, respectfully
If only she had smiled at me like Sook unni did...
If only she had hummed a tune like Sook unni did...
♫ The quiet rain
If so I could have loved her more...
...WELL, THEN AH SHOULD GO NOW. IT'S REALLY URGENT. THERE'S A BLIZZARD WARNING? ...IT'S OK, AH'VE BEEN THROUGH THEM MANY TIMES.

HMP I DON'T KNOW... IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS BUT
I THINK I COULD RECOGNIZE THEIR FACES YEAH I CAN PROBABLY DO IT.
SHE WAS A VERY KIND PERSON VERY KIND...
A very kind person...
PUT SOME BAEKBAN* IN HERE AND PRESS IT DOWN LIKE THIS

*Baekban: boiled alum

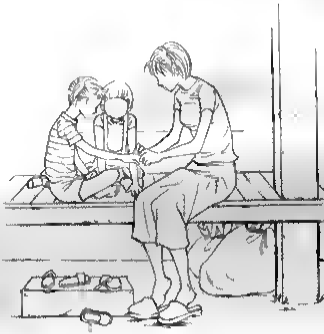
BAEKBAN?
THE STUFF THAT THEY SELL AT THE RESTAURANT NEXT TO THE ROAD?
IT LOOKED REALLY DISGUSTING...
YEAH! CHEEGAE BAEKBAN*
NO! YA CAN'T EAT THIS. IT'S NOT FOR EATING.
BUT DON'T THEY SELL RICE THERE? THEY SELL THIS?
IT SAYS ON THE DOOR OF THE STORE IN BIG RED LETTERS "VARIOUS CHEEGAE BAEKBAN."
YOU PASS BY IT EVERYDAY DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
AH NEVER LEARNED HOW TO READ OR WRITE...
WHY? DIDN'T YOU GO TO SCHOOL TO LEARN?

*Cheegae Baekban: Boiled rice with soup

GIVE ME YOUR HAND.

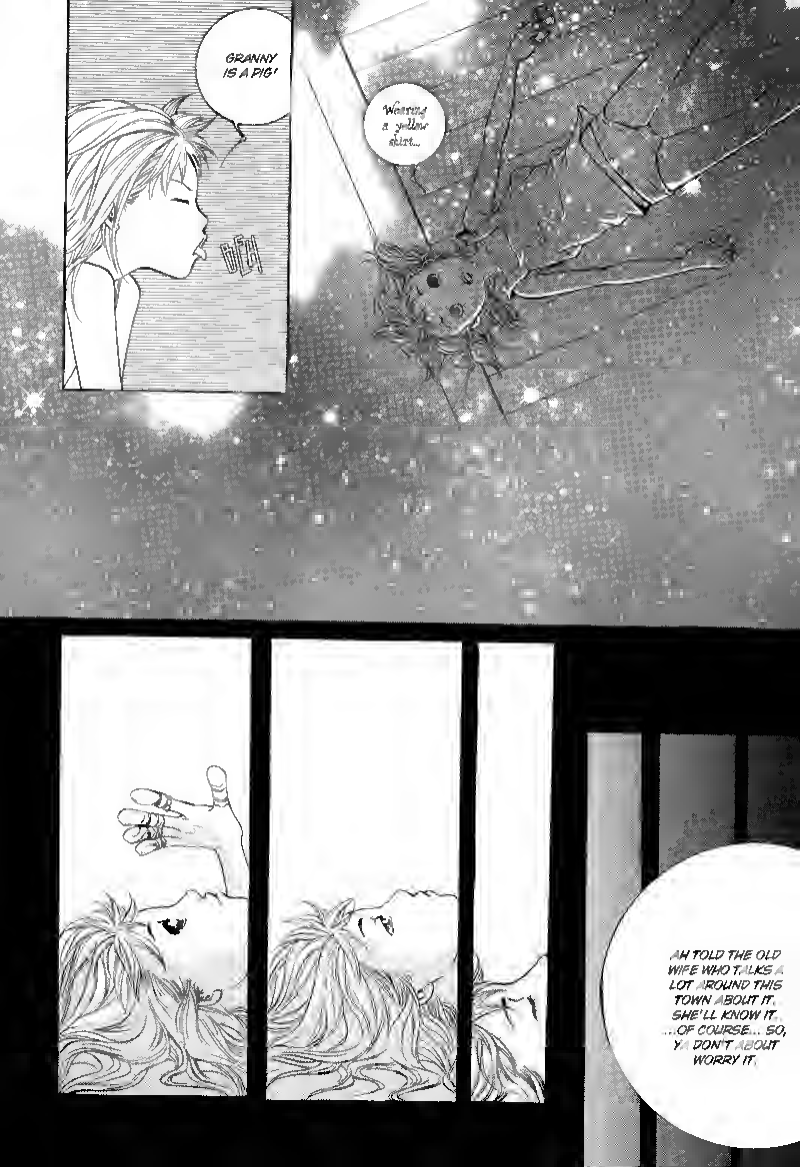
She was smiling as always.

But for some reason, I couldn't ask any further



...

GRANNY...
WHAH?
ABOUT SOOK-JINNI...
CAN'T YOU SEND HER TO SCHOOL?
WHAH?
OH! SOOK-JINNI IS OLDER, SO SHE SHOULD GO TO SHEENAE HIGH SCHOOL
Suddenly
WHAH ARE YA SAYIN'? COME IN AT ONCE AND SLEEP MOSQUITOES WILL GET YA
GRANNY!


GRANNY IS A PIG!
Wearing a yellow shirt...
AH TOLD THE OLD WIFE WHO TALKS A LOT AROUND THIS TOWN ABOUT IT. SHE'LL KNOW IT. ...OF COURSE... SO, Y... DON'T ABOUT WORRY IT.

...YOUNG JU'S MOM. YA YA, MY BABY.
NOBODY IS GONNA KNOW, SO YA DON'T CRY. LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER
AFTER FINISHING ALL THIS HERE, AH'LL PACK EVERYTHING AND GO TO BIG BROTHER'S HOUSE IN PUSAN
AND THAT ONE'LL HAVE A PLACE TO GO. SO YA DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. GOT THAT?
Mommy...?
...OF COURSE. JUST BELIEVE IN YOUR MOTHER. SO, DON'T CRY AND GO TO SLEEP NOW. OK?
Mommy, don't cry...

WHAH?
LET'S STUDY
GRANNY WON'T SEND YOU TO SCHOOL, SO I'LL TEACH YOU. I'M GOOD AT TAKING NOTES
LOOK, THIS IS BAEKBAN. THIS IS MY NAME. CHOI YOUNGJU. AND
THIS IS YOUR NAME. SOOK EE-UNN!

HUH...?
UNNI...?
She was a woman who suddenly cried at the interest that an eight year old showed her
A stupid woman...

This is it, tonight...?
Twenty years...
It's been twenty years.
A NEW WORLD
BEREW
But, it's still a place to soothe my loneliness.

Why is this it?

IF IT STAYS UNTIL THE FIRST SNOW COMES YOUR FIRST LOVE WILL BE ACCEPTED ABRACADABRA!
IT'S OK. THE ORDER HAS BEEN MADE. LET'S LOOK AGAIN. HOW LONG SHOULD SHE WAIT TO BE WITH JO JAEYOUNG?!
AH! NO, UNNI, I DON'T LIKE HIM!
LIAR...! THAT'S NOT FAIR. I TOLD YOU ABOUT JO JAEYOUNG!
...AH DON'T HAVE ONE...
WHAT ABOUT YOU? DO YOU HAVE A FIRST LOVE? YOU DO, RIGHT? TELL ME.

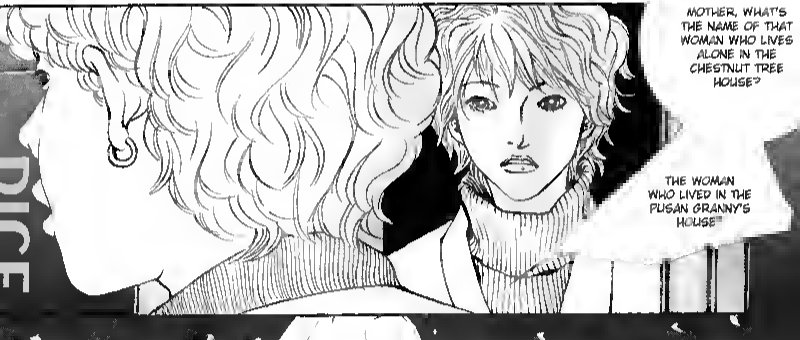
AH'M NOT LYING...
MY FIRST LOVE IS YA, YOUNGJU
AH LOVE YOUNGJU THE MOST IN THIS WHOLE WIDE WORLD...
HEE...
I knew that... Everything she said was true.

She was the first person to tell me that I was loved.
IT'S TRUE YA DON'T BELIEVE ME?
OK, OK! I'LL BELIEVE YOU
She was the only one who said the truth. But ... she was the only one I couldn't protect.
SOOK...!
suddenly
WHAT ARE YA DOING HERE?! DID YA FORGET AGAIN? AH TOLD YA OVER AND OVER TO GET READY... COME ON. IT'S ALMOST TIME!

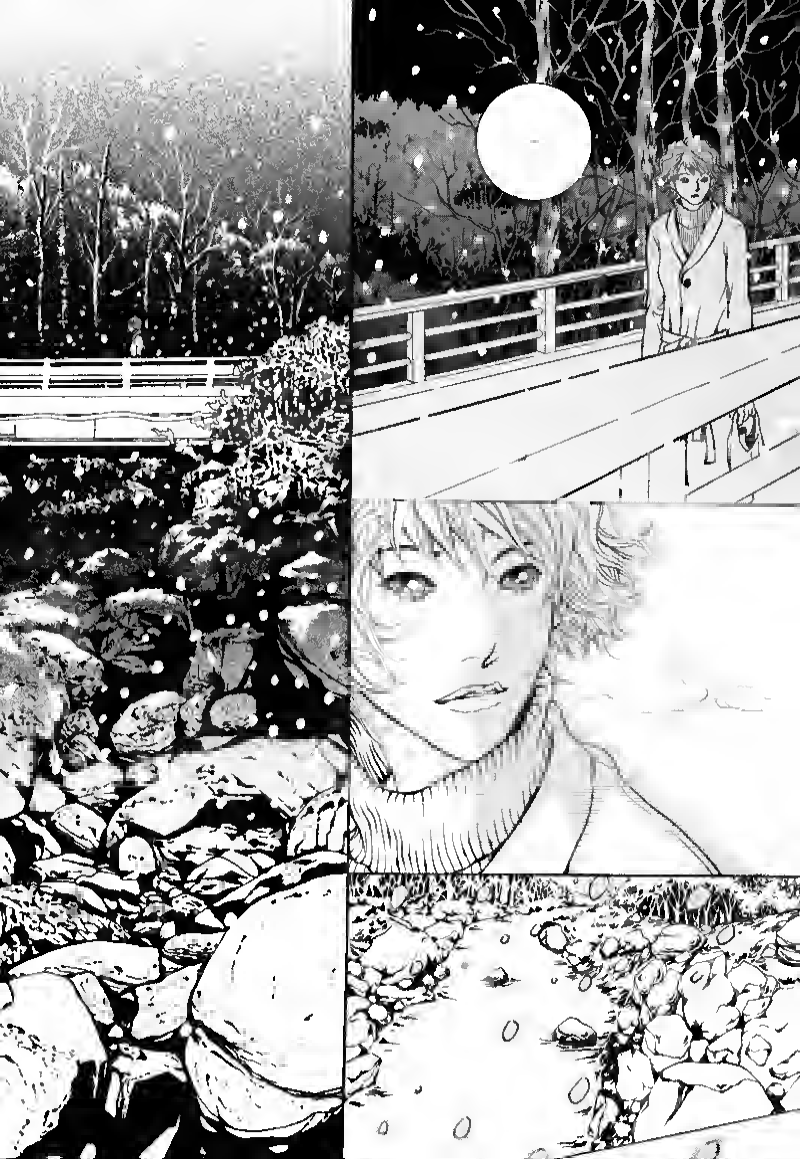
COME QUICKLY. HOW WOULD A YOUNG PERSON LIKE YA BE USEFUL IF YA'RE PLAYING AROUND LIKE THIS?
WOW. IT'S ALREADY TIME? AH'M COMING
HUMPH. WHY DO YOU TWO ONLY GET TO GO ALL THE TIME? I WANT TO GO, TOO!
IT'S COLD OUTSIDE SO YA'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE. LATER, GO EAT LUNCH AT MEESOON'S HOUSE AND PLAY THERE AH'LL BE BACK SOON. OK?
— YOUNG-JU
AH'LL BE BACK SOON, SO EAT WELL.
HUMPH...
She went out two or more times each month...
Now that I thought about it, Sook unni had gained a little more weight since the summer when she first came here.

JIN YANG-SOOK? I DON'T KNOW HER THAT WELL. WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE TOWN CENTER?
SHE'S NOT ORIGINALLY FROM HERE. SHE USES THE KYUNG-SANGDO* WAY OF TALKING.
RICE
KYUNG-SANGDO TALK?! THEN, MAYBE IT'S THAT WOMAN, HUH?

*Kyungsangdo: province in Korea.


MOTHER, WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT WOMAN WHO LIVES ALONE IN THE CHESTNUT TREE HOUSE?
THE WOMAN WHO LIVED IN THE PUSAN GRANNY'S HOUSE?
RICE

*Soju: Korean alcoholic drink



Sook unni s magic...
I HOPE WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS NEXT YEAR, TOO
YEAH...
...WOULD.
unni...
BGM - The poem of the forget-me-not

UNNI...!
IT WORKED...!
YOUNGJU, YA'LL GET HURT DON'T RUN
YOU WERE RIGHT. I BECAME GOOD FRIENDS WITH JO JAEYOUNG! THE FORGET-ME-NOTS! THEY WORKED!
WOW! REALLY?
THAT'S GOOD ARE YA REALLY HAPPY?
YES!
UNNI'S THE BEST.

YOU HAVE TO STAY WITH ME FOREVER AND NOT GO ANYWHERE, OK ?
SO I'LL LIVE WITH YOUNGJU LIKE THIS. FOR-EVER, RIGHT?!
OF COURSE. OF COURSE.
...That was her first and last ... lie.

Step
CREAK

Wearing a yellow shirt. ♪
♬
The quiet man... ♪
Hm... ♬
...HUH...?
WHO IS IT...?
UNNI...?
...
IS SOMEONE HERE?

YOUNG YOUNGJU...?
IS IT REALLY YA YOUNGJU...?
...WHY...
WHY ARE YOU HERE...?
You idiot...

WHY...?
ARE YA YOUNGJU...? ARE YA... REALLY YOUNGJU?
You idiot...
WHAH? SAY WHAH YA JUST SAID ONE MORE TIME.
AH PROMISED YOUNGJU... THAT AH'D LIVE HERE AS LONG AS AH LIVE... SO... GRANNY...
ABOUT THE BABY...
AH'LL GIVE YA THE BABY JUST LET ME LIVE HERE LIKE AH'VE BEEN LIVING 'TIL NOW... PLEASE
...PLEASE...

WHAT? YA'LL GIVE US THE BABY? DID YA COME HERE TO DO US A FAVOR? YA'RE DEMANDING YOUR LOST SACK AFTER WE SAVED YOUR LIFE.* OH, MY!
AH BROUGHT YA HERE WHEN YA WERE STILL WEAK WITH CHILD BECAUSE YOUR FORTUNE SAID YOUR CHILD WOULD BE A BOY. GO ASK YOUR UNCLE HOW HE GOT THE MONEY TO LET YOUR NIECES AND NEPHEWS EAT WELL
WHANK
WHANK
ARE YA PERHAPS DOING THIS BECAUSE YA WANT SOME MONEY? DID YOUR UNCLE TELL YA TO DO THIS? DID HE?
NO... IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. SO...
YA DON'T NEED TO GIVE ME MONEY, AND YA DON'T NEED TO MARRY ME OFF. JUST LET ME STAY HERE AS THE FOOL...
LET ME STAY WITH GRANNY AND YOUNG JU... AS THE FOOL...

*There's a story where a person saves a drowning man but the drowning man demands his lost sack instead. It means that someone is ungrateful

AH DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT AH DON T...

LISTEN TO ME CLOSELY

THAT GIRL YOUNGJU HAS NEVER RECEIVED HER MOTHER'S LOVE EVER SINCE SHE WAS A BABY. AND AH KNOW SHE GOT VERY CLOSE TO YA BECAUSE OF THAT

BUT YA CAN'T DO THIS JUST BECAUSE A CHILD TELLS YA TO. IF YA KEEP BEING STUBBORN, YA AND OF COURSE, THE BABY IN YOUR STOMACH ... AND

...YOUNGJU ALSO WILL BE MISERABLE... DO YA UNDERSTAND WHAT AH'M SAYING...?

YA CAN NEVER BE PART OF OUR FAMILY

...PACK YOUR THINGS MOVE TO ANOTHER PLACE.
I'M HOME.
I just ... kind of knew it.

Looking at her room that had lost the warmth in only half a day I felt...

that she would never come back.

And then,

exactly one month after she left, Mother came to get me with my younger brother in her arms.

YOUNGJU YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER IS HERE. SAY "YOUNG-GUK."

Mother looked happy...

So I was also happy...

MY BROTHER IS SICK...

HE NEEDS A MARROW TRANSPLANT... THERE'S A GREATER CHANCE OF A MATCH IF IT'S AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER

YOUNG-GUK IS A VERY GOOD SON. HE GOT INTO A FAMOUS COLLEGE BECAUSE HE STUDIED WELL, AND MY PARENTS WERE VERY PROUD. AND...
I KNOW THAT THIS IS SHAMELESS OF ME TO SAY THIS BUT ... PLEASE FORGIVE EVERYTHING THAT GRANNY AND MOTHER DID WRONG. HE'S YOUR SON. PLEASE HELP HIM.
... IF YOU WANT TO BE WITH HIM, THEN YOU CAN. NOW ... THERE ISN'T ANYONE TO STOP YOU. YOU CAN STAY WITH ME UNTIL HE COMPLETELY RECOVERS ...

'Can ah now...?"

'As the family fool...?"

I just ... thought that it was because this place is Uh Heul Lee.

The scenery I missed,
the warmth I missed,
the trees along the border
of the road I missed,
the person I missed...
The place where all
of these existed...
was Uh Yeul Lee.
Finally... we get to meet again.

"...My first love
is ya, Youngju..."

Uh Heul Lee fin

en·tro·py

1

Park Hee Jung's Collection of Short Stories

Story 10 - Crybaby Angel

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010 Crybaby Angel

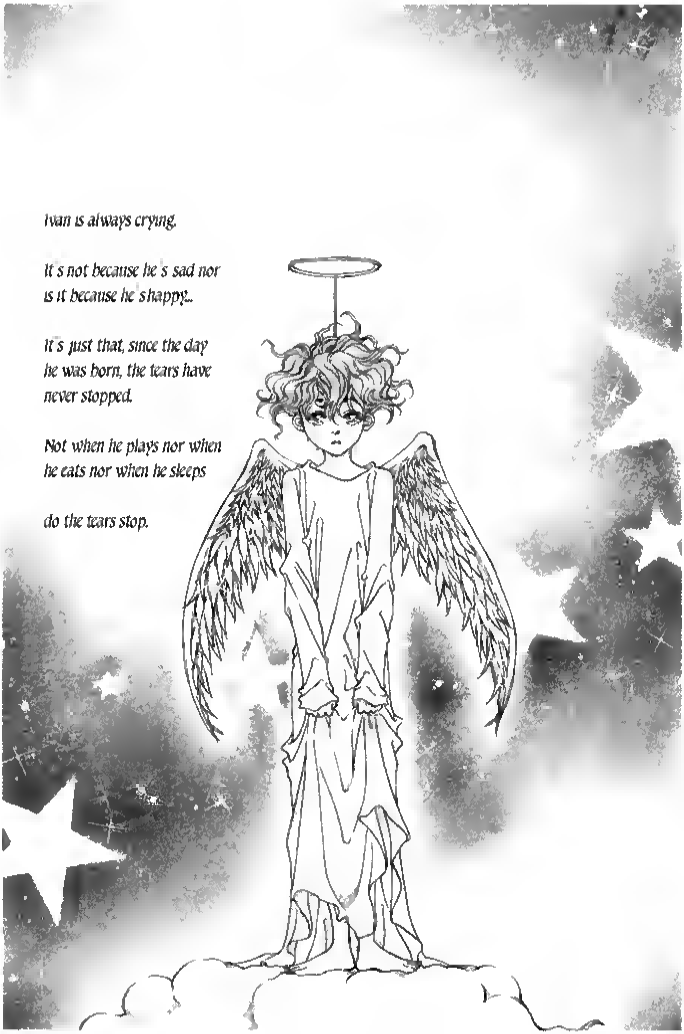
Ivan is always crying.

It's not because he's sad nor
is it because he's happy...

It's just that, since the day
he was born, the tears have
never stopped.

Not when he plays nor when
he eats nor when he sleeps

do the tears stop.



But Ivan has never thought
that his condition was sad.
However, today he's crying out of
sadness for the first time in his life.

You see, he failed the test of being a "happy baby".

"Ivan, if you go down to Earth, you will become a fussy crybaby and make your would be parents unhappy." Such words from the chief angel wouldn't leave his head.

When all his friends were busy with preparations to become a happy baby Ivan alone headed down to the River of Sorrow. He thought "Rather than living on a star without any friends around, it'll be better for me to jump into the River of Sorrow and become a nameless shooting star..."

Ivan hated his tears that constantly flowed out of his eyes. He hated them so much that he could no longer stand it. And so, he went to the River of Sorrow, which was near the gate to the graveyard of the North Star.

Sitting at the riverbank, Ivan thought, "It's only natural that I would fail the test. Who in this world would want a crybaby like me?" as his chest became filled with sadness and hatred.

It was then that...

"Why are you crying like that?"
Ivan surprised and crying, looked behind him to find a strange looking angel with black hair and immoral clothes...
It was a delinquent angel, literally

"It seems like your life is pathetic, too, seeing as how you're crying near the River of Sorrow on a day like this..!"
the delinquent angel said as he sighed and sat down next to the crybaby angel

"I'm Hama. And you?"
"Ivan."
"You came to become a shooting star too?"
"Yes..."
And when he said that, Ivan felt terrible.

"You don't look miserable at all...
You're not even a deformed angel like me..."
"Deformed...?"
Ivan took a closer look and saw that the delinquent angel's wings were of two different colors, one of which... was the black color of babies from the dark world.

But Ivan felt more deformed than the delinquent angel, Hama.

"It's strange for an angel's wings to be of different colors, but it's not like you can't fly or anything like that. Look at me. Ever since I was born I've had this condition where tears keep coming out of my eyes. Because of that I couldn't become a happy baby..."

Ivan continued to talk. "Moreover, I don't have any friends anymore. Everyone else became a happy baby and went down to Earth... I really can't stand being lonely...
"Well, I've never had a friend ever since I was born. Everyone runs away when they see me..." Hama said with a sad face.
Then, Hama came up with an extraordinary idea by chance. "Ivan ... um ... If it's OK with you, I'll be your friend. You're the only angel who hasn't run away from me."
Ivan looked at delinquent Hama with surprised eyes. "Will you become my friend for sure...? I mean, look at me. I'm always in tears. My hair, my clothes, my wings, even my little cloud are damp and wet from all the crying... Despite all that, do you still want to be my friend?"
Hama laughed and said, "You know, this stupid black wing is only good for absorbing water." Hama softly lifted his black wing and brought it closer to Ivan's eyes. Then, strangely enough, the black wing quickly soaked up Ivan's large, clear teardrops.

Hama looked at Ivan and said,
"We'll become good friends."
"Yeah. It's good to meet good parents and become a happy baby and all, but don't you think that becoming friends who will take care of each other wouldn't be too bad of an alternative...?

Ivan was happy. His sadness disappeared to a distant place, as if it was a dream fading away. His heart now became warm with the love for his new friend, Hama.

"Thank you, Hama..."
"Thank you, Ivan..."

Now the two angels are no longer lonely.

As expected Hama and Ivan became good friends. In the afternoon Hama would wipe away Ivan s tears. At night Ivan squeezed out the water from the wing that was wet with his tears from that day

The tears from Ivan that fell from Hama s wing came down to earth as a cluster of stars that protected his long time friends. Although they once experienced night mares, they are now happy babies whose dreams

will shine brightly forever and ever

"You're the only angel
who hasn't run away from me."

Crybaby Angel fin

"The wind whispered toward him like so

You don't need to feel for me. I'm just the wind
If you're going to call me that, then you may as well
call me an alien instead. It's not a bad echo. Then
again, well-said words have no meaning to me
anyway

But aren't you just blabbering nonsense?

Me? The one blabbering nonsense is you. I'm just
giving you hints on how to figure out your heart."

Excerpt from Murakami Haruki's
Listen to the Wind's Song

I often think about the things
I blabber about

There's no meaning to them, but then again,
there are many meanings to them. There are
no reasons for them, but there are also many
reasons for them—

I want to hear his song once more.

2004 March
The day of fire – when I was
waiting for the wind.

Park Hee Jung's
Collection of Short
Stories - The End